A DISCOURSE OF NATURAL AND MORAL IMPOTENCY.

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By the Author of
The Great Propitiation.

Author Truman B. D.

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TO THE

Ingenuous, Chriſtian *READER.*

I More fear the cenſures of thoſe that ſhall read but part of this diſcourſe, or take their eſtimate concerning the import of it at the ſecond hand, from the repreſentation of the Ignorant, or deeply præ-engaged Learned; than an attempted confutation of any deliberate Oppoſer; yet I promiſe my ſelf exemption from neither.

I pretend not here to teach new Divinity. The things here maintained, that can be pretended ſtrange, are not ſo remote from the common ſentiments of men, as the moſt will ſuppoſe, being but the opinions, or the immediate conſequences of ſuch opinions, as the moſt moderate men have, at leaſt virtually, granted, and maintained; though I cannot deny but many of them, being not well conſiſtent

with themſelves, have alſo maintained the contrary; not that I hereby accuſe any: for this is only a not denying ſuch while good Chriſtians, to be, in this particular, ill Logicians.

That no man is juſtly bound by any Law of God, or man, any further than his natural faculties and powers reach, is written with indelible Characters on every man's Soul as legibly, as that there is ſuch a thing as juſtice or injuſtice.

And ſecondly, That a man is bound by the Law of God (what ever ſome ſay to the contrary) ſo far; ſo that his greateſt wickedneſs or averſation of will to obey it, will not excuſe him, but really add to his inexcuſableneſs, is as legible as that the greateſt wickedneſs is wickedneſs, and doth not excuſe. And he that will deny this, may with as much reaſon deny the moral laudability of Chriſt's obedience on Earth, or an Angel's in Heaven, becauſe of their morally inſuperable inclination of Will to ſuch obedience; whereas ſuch obedience is more laudable, as having more of the Will.

Yet thirdly, ſuch wickedneſs, or averſation of Will to good, will as certainly, as what is moſt certain, hinder (elſe you muſt ſay, Man's wickedneſs is no hindrance, or ſo little a hindrance of his obedience, that he hath no need of the grace of the Holy Spirit to overcome it) I ſay, will moſt certainly hinder

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man's complyance with the divine commands, till God ſhall take away, or overcome ſuch reluctancy of will by ſome ſuch ſupereffluence of Grace, as he is not bound in juſtice to afford them, or hold them excuſed. For God is bound in juſtice to do no more for men in order to the making them obedient to his Laws, or elſe to hold them excuſed for not being obedient; than ſo much as would render their not obeying his Laws culpable and inexcuſable, if men were not wicked, or had no averſation of will to ſuch obedience.

Now from theſe three poſitions by evident conſequence follows, (ſuppoſing you will allow men to have any culpable or ſinful Impotency on them; which he that denyes, muſt affirm, that men can for any Impotency on them whatſoever, ſo order their Converſations, as not to need Chriſt's death or pardon for their failings therein; And may alſo, with as much ſhew of reaſon, either deny, that it can in any ſenſe be ſaid truly, That Chriſt could not ſin, or Angels in Heaven cannot ſin, or God cannot ſin or lye; or elſe deny that this their morally inſuperable rectitude or holineſs of will was or is Morally commendable) I ſay, it hence follows,

First; *That man's culpable Impotency lyeth only in an Impotency, to do what he hath a power to do, or (to ſpeak the ſame in other words) in man's not being able to do in one ſenſe, what he can do in another ſenſe. And*

to ſay otherwiſe, is to forget, that Morality ſuppoſeth, and is ſubjected in a naturally capable ſubject, viz. *in a rational Being, or a being indued with the power or faculty of free Will, And conſequently that a Moral or culpable Cannot-obey, neceſſarily ſuppoſeth, and is ſubjected in natural power to obey; and a Moral or laudable Cannot ſin, in a Natural power to ſin.*

Secondly; *That the effect of the Grace of the Holy Ghoſt, lyeth not in man's receiving from God the meer power to obey God's Commands: Since, Firſt, This power is due in juſtice, ſuppoſing he require obedience from men, and therefore is not from Grace (The Law ſuppoſes this, or it could not be a Law, becauſe not obligatory to a man wanting ſuch power.) And Secondly; Man could not ſin, or be guilty, or inexcuſable without this power, in not doing what the command requires; whereas men can ſin without this Grace; elſe why do any pray for it for themſelves or others to keep them from ſin.*

But the effect of this Grace lyeth in receiving from God ſomthing over and beſide this power, to cauſe a man to do what he is bound to do, and would be to blame for not doing it, and therefore conſequently had a power to do it, though this Grace had been denyed him.

Me thinks theſe things are ſo clear, that it would be a reproach, not only to Learning,

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but to humanity, if any, especially if many Learned men, should be found seriously to hold the contrary.

Sure I am, that this distinction of Natural and Moral Impotency, *is of such Importance in Divinity, That they that shall speak of the Controversies hereby endeavoured to be cleered without keeping cleer notions about this distinction, shall (though otherwise learned Fathers and Doctors) speak like Children concerning them; And also that men of ordinary understandings, keeping to this distinction, may competently satisfie themselves and others, if willing to be satisfied in such controversies as have posed the greatest wits and Schollars, that keep not to it.*

I look upon St. Jerom's *humour as much obstructing the increase of knowledg; who endeavoured to discourage attempts against his writings, by telling* * Ruffinus, *his Antagonist, that he had hornes, and whoever medled with him should find him a horned beast. Yea, I so far dislike it, that I hereby signifie to ingenuous men that shall have any inclination to reflect upon this discourse, that I am so far from having, or at least from desiring to have any such offensive weapons against the truth, that I desire to lye open to truth, by being naked of any armour of defence against it's convictions; And therefore have no great aversation to say, as those,*

* *Hoc omnum denuncio, & repetens iterum iterumque monebo, cornutam bestiam petis,* Hieron. Apol. 1. contr. Ruffin.

Judg. 19. 30. *once did*, viz. [Conſider of it, take advice, and ſpeak your minds.] *Provided, men would but obſerve the commonly neglected order preſcribed in that ſpeech, by practiſing the two firſt parts of the advice, before the laſt.*

That this diſcourſe may be as influential to the promoting of Truth, Holineſs, and Peace amongſt us, as it is proper and ſuitable to ſuch ends, is the prayer and hearts-deſire of the Author.

A DISCOURSE OF Natural and Moral IMPOTENCY.

You will not come to me that you might have Life, John 5. 40.
No man can come to me, Except the Father which sent me, draw him John 6. 44.

IT is so apparent, that a proper Impotency (in the common strict sense) doth excuse from all obedience, to commands before God and man, and maketh all Conditional Promises on such a condition, so far from being of Grace and kindness, that they are Nulli-

ties; that all * Lawyers and Caſuiſts generally acknowledg it. And ſuch as deny Man's having any ability to Good, do it not willingly, but for fear of inconveniences on the other hand; and though they do deny it, yet at other times grant it implicitly, yea and flie to it as the only refuge from extreams on their own hand.

* The Law conſtructions of our *Common*, and, in caſes Teſtamentary, of the *Civil* Law, in making ſuch conditional promiſes abſolute; do not contradict but confirm this, becauſe made upon this reaſon: elſe they would be Nullities.

And again; That there is an Impotency in men to Good is apparent, not only from Scripture, as, *No man can come to me, except &c.* and can the Blackmore change his skin, *&c.* but from the woful Experience of all; yea the Heathens * acknowledged it, and were puzled how to give an account of its original: ſo that he is a Monſter of men that doth not acknowledg and lament it.

* *Plato. Porphyrie* alſo exhorts all to lament it as the Antients did, propounding the ancient Heathens for a pattern, *lib. de Abſtin.*

Yet it is ſo apparent, That we are too blame in not doing the things we have an Impotency to, and that Promiſes of mercy to returning Sinners are of Grace; that a man ſhould contradict his own knowledg and the ſentiments of all the world, beſide the Scripture, to ſay otherwiſe: All which notions, taken together, ſeem irreconcilable: and

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are indeed irreconcilable (ſay men what they will) without ſome Diſtinction about Impotency.

Now it is a deſirable thing, if poſſible, to come to a ſtaiedneſs and conſiſtency, that we may not as in the dark ſay and unſay, as the preſent difficulties preſs us on either hand, not knowing what we ſay, or whereof we affirm.

That Diſtinction well underſtood, which is much inſiſted on by the *French* Proteſtant Divines, would much conduce herein, namely, the diſtinction of *Natural and Moral Impotency.*

And though many, of Dr. *Twiſſes* Judgment in other things, oppoſe it, yet he himſelf in many places, when preſſed with difficulties, fled to it as his chief Sanctuary, *Vindic. grat. lib. 2. Errat. 9. Sect. 6. pag.* (*vihi*) 211. *Rurſus, impotentia faciendi* (it is miſprinted *faciens*) *quod Deo gratum eſt & acceptum, non eſt impotentia Naturæ ſed Morum: nulla enim nobis deeſt facultas naturæ, per peccatum originale; juxta illud* Auguſtini, *Nulli agnoſcendæ veritatis abſtulit facultatem. Adhuc remanet potentia quâ facere poſſumus quæcunq; volumus.* And, pag 212. *Amplius advertas, Impotentia, ex amputatione manuum orta, eſt impotentia naturæ, at impotentia ad bonum eſt duntaxat impotentia Morum, quâ nihil obſtante poterit homo morale aliquod officium præſtare ſi velit.* So in his Anſwer to *Hord, pag.* 155. Obſerve (ſaith he) how this Author confounds Impotency Moral, which conſiſteth in the corruption of mens powers natural; and Impotency Natural, which conſiſteth in bereaving him of power natural.

This diſtinction of Natural and Moral power, or Impotency, is not uſed to affirm or deny the coming or ariſing of one or either of them from nature: for I am not now ſpeaking *de origine*, whence they ariſe; but to denote the ſpecies or kinds, and the eſſential difference of their Natures, * come they which way they will.

* *Non refert ſcelus unde cadat, ſcelus eſſe fatendum eſt.* Manil

That is a Phyſical or Natural habit or action, that is neither ψεκτὸν nor ἐπαινετὸν, laudable nor vituperable *in genere morum*, that a man can neither be counted good and honeſt, or bad and diſhoneſt; for, as agility or lameneſs, dulneſs, blockiſhneſs, or acuteneſs; but may be (having ſuch power, and doing accordingly) admired though not praiſed; and for the defect of ſuch power may be pitied, but not blamed or puniſhed: and this Impotency may be a puniſhment, but cannot be a ſin.

The Moral and Ethical act or habit is juſt contrary. It is that which is laudable or vituperable, and that which a man may be looked on as honeſt or diſhoneſt for.

Now Natural Impotency is always, in this ſenſe, of ſomthing that a man cannot do if he would never ſo much; or hath not the very faculty of willing it.

The *Moral Impotency* is of ſomthing that a man hath the natural faculty to will, or can do it if he would; but is hindered only by moral vitious habits, from willing or doing it.

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The Stoick Philoſophers uſe to expreſs this difference well, by τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, and τὰ οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν.

Every man (though he know not how to expreſs this to others, nor poſſibly clear it to himſelf) hath a notion of theſe things differing; and which belong to one ſort, and which to the other; and that one is capable of a juſt command or prohibition, the other not.

If any one hear of a man that abhorrs ſuch a particular meat, which is Gods good creature appointed for food, he pitties him, but doth not blame him; and ſo, when he hears of the man that ſo abhorred Wine, that he could not receive it in the Sacrament; But if he hear of a man that hates and abhorrs God and good men, and that cannot endure to hear any good inſtructions, he blames him; and is ſure, this is not blameleſs as the other is. But I will ſpeak more plainly, if poſſible.

That Man hath and wanteth not, a natural power of doing any duty, who hath, firſt an objective Evidence, that is intelligible, fitted and ſuited objectively to produce the Act, that he either knows, or may know what is required of him, if he make that uſe of his underſtanding, that he hath power to do.

Secondly: That hath the natural faculties of underſtanding and willing the thing commanded, and that not only in *actu primo*, as we ſay Natural Fools have; but *actu ſecun-*

do, i. e. without natural impediments hindering their exerciſe: Here now is enough named already for all elicit Acts, *viz.* meer acts of the will and underſtanding.

Thirdly: Then he hath the natural power for performing the imperate Acts, when there is no external or internal force, no man or thing hindering him; and hath a body rightly diſpoſed, is not deaf or blind, *&c.* and hath the outward helps neceſſary for ſome *imperate* acts, as, a ſufficient eſtate to give, *&c.* So that he can do the *imperate* act if he would.

This is it, Then a man hath the *natural power* to do any thing, when he hath the natural faculties, and no hinderance but that he can do the thing if he would; And then he hath a *Natural Impotency* when he hath not theſe faculties, or cannot do the thing commanded, if he would never ſo much. Now I will name the Properties of it.

Firſt; The want of this natural power, this *Natural Impotency*, doth excuſe, as is commonly granted; and they that deny it are not conſiſtent with themſelves, but unawares grant it. Total *Natural Impotency* doth excuſe before God and Man: Yea all *Natural Impotency* doth excuſe according to the meaſure and degree of it. Some little *Natural Impotency* doth in ſome meaſure, though not wholly; *à tanto*, though not *à toto*. It is ſome excuſe if a Servant be commanded a foot journey and go not, if ſomthing

thing-lame, so that he could not go it but with great difficulty; but if quite lame (could not at all) a full excuse. If a man be *hebetior*, blockish, somthing dull, it is some excuse for his not understanding difficulties in Religion, which he might yet possibly, with great difficulty understand; but if quite a Fool, so as to have no more use of Reason than a Beast; it is a total excuse from any command to learn or understand. Without doubt a man of dull Intellectuals, is not bound to understand such things in Divinity, as require great acuteness of parts to understand; for, he cannot if he would. And doubtless a command for a man to will his own misery formally, or to nill his own happiness formally (which all agree, No man can do) would not oblige; so as that a man should be too blame in not doing it: since a man hath not the natural faculty or power to do such things.

If a man that is not much-inclined to it, give himself over to sleep in times of Religious worship, it is a great fault: If a man be very sleepy, and sleep at such a time, it is some excuse, even so far as it arose from a natural cause; but yet it is a fault so far, as it was from carelessness to stir up himself, from want of the awe of Gods presence, so far as he might if he would do otherwise; but if it so seized on him, that his greatest desires and endeavours could not preserve him from it, no fault: Need I prove this? The very mention seems enough.

All those Divines, consulted about it, took it for granted that it was not the duty of that good man, to drink wine in the Eucharist, that could not if he would, and that the general command did not oblige him.

And all generally grant it as apparent, That the Heathens (that never had, nor could obtain the Revelation of it) shall never be condemned for not Believing Christ and his death, because they had not the means that were naturally necessary; And by the same Reason they must affirm (else they must say That is no reason, and find some other) that they shall not be condemned for not doing the things they could not do, and also that we shall not be condemned for not knowing or doing the things that we cannot know or do: else they must say, God had greater respect for the Heathen, than for us. There are only three Exceptions that I can call to mind, that are made by any to this general Assertion, with any shew of reason.

First, some make this Exception, That if a man's natural Impotency proceed from his own fault, or his Ancestors, so as to be his own fault, in Law, or reputatively; then it doth not excuse him from obedience to the command.

I think it apparent, that yet it doth excuse; and I wil bring their own strongest Instances; If a man have by his own lewd courses run himself into debt, so that now he cannot pay his debts if he would; his not paying in this case

case after his disability, ceaseth to be a fault. He ought indeed to lament that former wickedness, that brought this Natural Impotency upon him (and to aggravate it in his Confessions with these afflictve consequents, that, He cannot now pay, and, His Creditors are provoked, and, God dishonoured) for he could then have done otherwise; And he ought to desire to pay, and for the future resolve to use such probable means diligently, as that he may hereafter be inabled to pay part or all; for this he can do.

But he cannot truly, when the Creditour bids him pay, and he would, but cannot, in his Confessions of his faults to God that day, say, I have to all my other sins added this sin, that I did not this day pay the man when he required it. Now, suppose the Creditor had demanded it ten times in a day, there would have been ten several sins of injustice in not paying him his own, if he had been able to pay it; but he cannot when unable *lament* that, over and besides the committing those sins that disenabled him from paying, he is guilty before God of ten new faults that day in not paying. It cannot be said that a man overwhelmed in debt, through his own former default, and would pay but cannot, lives in known present omission of that which is his duty: And so if a man have by some sinful ways broken his legs, or brought some Natural Impotency on himself, that he cannot go to hear a Sermon, he may lament his for-

former wickedness that brought that Impotency on him, but cannot lament it as his fault that day that he did not go to hear the Sermon: that is, he ought to lament that as his fault which he could have not-done when he did it; and that is not to be lamented as his fault, which he could not do, when he did it not.

If you shall object, *But God may punish these men?* I answer, There can be no just punishment but for a fault; but this is no fault.

God may for ever punish them for those their faults that caused this Impotency: for they might have done otherwise, but not at all for the not doing that which they could not do.

If you object. *But men may punish the Debtor above-mentioned? Will you say, Laws are unjust that do so?* This Objection hath greatest strength to silence Antagonists, to run them upon the prejudice of speaking against wise Laws, and *Senatus-consulta*, and *Responsa prudentum*, which are to be reverenced. I Answer, the Law makers, in allowing such men to lie in prison at the will of the Creditors, do justly and wisely: For, how could any be restrained from luxuriously lavishing all away with fear of Law, if when they had rendered themselves unresponsible, they were to be acquitted from punishment. Yea, they do not unwisely or unjustly (because humane lawes must be general

neral and finite, and not infinite, and taking notice of all particulars, unleſs they will make this only Law, which would be virtually infinite, To leave all to the diſcretion of Judges, which *Legiſlators* that have care of the Common-Weal muſt not do,) I ſay they do not unjuſtly to ſuffer men to lie in Priſon at the wil of the Creditor, where there was no fault, but the man's poverty came ſome way unexpected, and unavoidably by humane prudence; becauſe greater inconveniences would enſue in having a Law to free men from puniſhment from the Creditors, if poverty came on them without any fault. Becauſe it is an eaſie thing to conceal Eſtates, and this would unavoidably ſubject Creditors to the Will and Conſcience of their Debtors: whereas there is far greater reaſon that the Borrower (as *Solomon* ſpeaks) ſhould be Servant to the Lender, and in his power; than that the Lender ſhould be Servant to the Borrower and in his power: and it is more agreeable to natural equity, and Reaſons of Government; and the contrary would be deſtructive to the Community. *Legiſlators* ſuppoſe, or will and deſire, that Creditors will not keep Debtors in Priſon when unable to pay, and this diſability came on them without any former fault, as in riotous miſpending; but if Creditors do otherwiſe, they judg it would be more inconvenient to the Community, to hinder them by a Law, than to leave it to their own Conſcience.

ſcience. But if there was a fault, whereby they came to their want, the Creditors do juſtly in keeping them in Priſon (provided the puniſhment exceed not the offence) if they have reſpect to their former fault and wickedneſs in miſpending, and alſo do it to make them warnings to others that they do not ſinfully laviſh. But if any ſhould know he is unable, and yet keep his Debtor in Priſon, not with reſpect to his former fault, or to warn others; but meerly in wrath and vexation, becauſe he doth not pay him when he knoweth he cannot, it would be ſinful and irrational, becauſe, ſo far, it is for no fault. But now God will not do ſuch a thing (as humane Laws muſt ſuffer, and ſome irrational ſinful men may do) in his immediate Government; He can infallibly diſtinguiſh where a fault is, and where none; And as he will not puniſh a man for not paying his debts, when his Poverty came on him by the hand of God, and not by his own default; ſo where his diſability to pay did come by his own ſin, he will not puniſh him for that which was no fault, as his then not-paying when he could not; but for that which was his fault, his ſinful making himſelf unable when he could have done otherwiſe.

The inſtance of Drunkenneſs ſeems difficult to be anſwered. I may here be overwhelmed with the Authority of thoſe that grant, All Natural Impotency doth excuſe, except that Impotency of underſtanding and will,

will, that ariſeth from drunkenneſs, and that this is ſo far from excuſing, that it * increaſeth the fault. I ſhall before I directly anſwer, promiſe this (which I perceive is the greateſt Objection againſt what I ſhall ſay, & cauſeth the Miſtake of Caſuiſts in determining otherwiſe;) Juſt and prudent, and neceſſary Laws that men ought to make, are not to over-rule our judgments here. I like well that ſaying of our Engliſh Lawyers, that, The Law will rather ſuffer a miſchief, than an unconvenience; meaning by a Miſchief, that which may fall too heavy on a particular man accidentally; and by Inconvenience that which would be a general Inconvenience to the whole Community; it being incumbent on them *Ne quid detrimenti reſpublica caperet*. It would be a miſs, could it be helped without a greater inconvenience, To allow an injured man's teſtimony to take away another's life; yet I think it a good Law that a man's Oath againſt him that robbed him, is Evidence enough to a Jury; becauſe otherwiſe, whereas not one in many is apprehended, they might ſo order their Robberies, as not one in a multitude would be puniſhed. So the Law of concealing a dead Baſtard-Child ſeems hard, but is neceſſary on this account. God himſelf, if he make Laws, poſſibly fit for humane Judicatures; they muſt ſubject ſome to miſchief in the Lawyer's ſenſe, as that of the Oath of two Witneſſes being irrefragable, which ſome innocent man might ſuffer by.

* τοῖς μὲν βίοις δι' αὐτὰ τὰ ἐπιτίμια. *Ariſt. ad Nicom.*

I

I think, *Legiſlators* do wiſely and juſtly in inflicting a penalty on men for doing the thing when drunk, that they would inflict if he had done it when ſober; For

Firſt, for the moſt part, Men drunk have the uſe of their will and underſtanding in ſome meaſure, and ſo may at that time be reſtrained by conſideration of the penalty; and they have alſo at that time the greateſt need for the moſt part to be reſtrained by the greatneſs of the penalty; And if they then knew there was no danger, or no great danger of the penalty, the puniſhment being to be mitigated; it would ſubject the Innnocent to the Luſts and rage of Drunken men.

Secondly: Suppoſe, ſome may be quite mad with drink, and utterly deprived of the uſe of Reaſon, and conſequently of Will, and yet are capable of committing ſuch wicked acts (I mean materially wicked): It would be an imprudent particular Law that ſhould be made to ſpare ſuch; becauſe the moſt that commit enormities in their drink, would eſcape upon this pretence; and many would deſignedly drink to exceſs, that they might without danger, or with little danger, be revenged, or fulfil ſome other Luſt; and they would know that the more horrid their fact was (as killing a Father) the more likely they would be to eſcape upon pretence of madneſs, and if none, but one mad, would do it.

Thirdly: There would yet be ſomthing of

of justice, though wholly deprived of the use of reason, because the punishment is for the offence of Drunkenness, which was voluntary; and to make others dread Drunkenness, especially they that have in this respect the most need, that are apt to be in a rage by it, as that which may bring on them by the consequence, Capital punishment. And also when the Law gives a man as much power to hold his Neighbour to his bargain which he made when Drunk as when Sober; partly it may be for penalty; and partly it may be for inconveniencies, that otherwise would follow, were the Law otherwise. And yet no Conscientious man (however in ordinary cases) would hold a man to his bargain, if quite, or but almost, deprived of the use of his reason by his drink. But to speak to the Case.

See Beverley's Case, Coke lib. 4. 123.

If a man should through Drunkenness proceed to such madness, as to be totally deprived of the use of his reason, and should then kill a man; he ought, when in his right mind, lament the sin of making himself Drunk; and ought to aggravate it with such Circumstances: but he might rather look on his killing the man, as a punishment God suffered him to incur for his sin, and as his sorrow, rather than any distinct sin; for it would not be properly and formally Murder, nor any other sin; because not at all voluntary: for if there be no Understanding, it is impossible there should be any thing of Will,

will, univocally & properly so called; & proportionably it lessens that particular fault, if almost deprived of Reason. Yet I dare not say with *Augustin, lib. 22. Contr. Faust. Manic.* cap. 44. *Culpandus est Lot, non quantum ille Incestus in ebrietate admissus, sed quantum illa Ebrietas, meretur*, That is, that *Lot* was to be blamed for his Drunkenness, but not for his Incest. Because Expositors are not agreed of the meaning of the place; And I durst less say it of his second incest: for he might be guilty of Incest interpretatively, it not being enough against his will while he had the use of it, if he before his second Dunkenness knew what had fallen out in the first, and might not improbably suppose the like might follow again. But I should be tiresome, if I should endeavour too great exactness. You see the thing in these made plain, and that is enough here. Suppose a Master find his Servant Drunk to a total senselessness, and then should utter such words as these, I command thee now to go immediately such a Journey, would it not be irrational in the Master to be angry at his Servant, not only (which he may be) for making himself Drunk, and unfit for hearing and obeying his commands, both which he could have not done when he did them; But also for his not going the journey at that time when he knew he could not?

Secondly; Others make this Exception, that all Natural Impotency doth excuse, except

cept the man think he is able, and that he hath the Natural power to do the thing he is commanded, and then it doth not excuse; then it is his fault not to do the thing commanded, though he cannot. The instance they use to bring is this, If a Servant be bound in his bed, that he cannot rise, he knowing nothing of it, and his Master calls him, and bids him rise; but he resolvedly lies still and will not.

This is easily answered: For any one may see that the fault here, is not, That he did not rise, which he could not; but that he did not will, desire, or endeavour to rise, which he could do.

This Instance rather confirms what I say. And again, this Instance is very improper for the thing it is commonly brought, and as it is commonly applied; for this seems to take for granted, that the wicked are in no fault, in that they do not Repent and Believe; and so, that the commands of Repenting and Believing do not oblige them; but only it is their fault they do not desire, will, and endeavour to do these: and it is to grant they may will, desire, and endeavour to obey the Gospel, as having no Impotency to these, but only cannot do the thing desired. Whereas I must deny this as Pelagianism, and must say, that, in the sense they cannot believe and obey, they cannot desire, will, and endeavour it; and I can shew you that to will so far as to come to the prevailing choice,

would be Saving. Yet theſe mean the prevailing degree: For when they tell men they cannot believe the Goſpel, but wiſh them do what they can, *viz:* Will it; they do not mean that they exhort them by this to will to obey the Goſpel in ſuch a low degree, and ſo remiſsly, as yet to will prevailingly to reject the Goſpel. This again implies, to make it ſenſe, That, if wicked men did know (as the Objectors ſuppoſe themſelves do) that they have no power, then it would be no fault for them to reject the Goſpel. And then it would be Miniſters duty indeed (or they are very cruel to Souls) to tell them, they have no Natural power to Repent and Believe, to free them from this ſuppoſed errour, that they might be free from fault, and know they are not bound to comply with the Goſpel.

Object. *But is it no aggravation of the very not doing any thing, when a man thinks he can do it, and cannot?*

I Anſwer. Not in the leaſt: For Natural Impotency cometh not in the leaſt within Morality. You may as well ſay, it would leſſen a mans fault before God, that thinketh he hath no greater an eſtate than will meerly ſerve his Family-neceſſities, and ſpends it on a great Feaſt, to have a ſuperfluous Eſtate before that faln to him that he knew not of.

Thirdly: Others make this Exception to the general rule, *That mans Natural Impotency*

potency to obey, doth excuse from obediente, except the reason why men obey not, be, not because they cannot, though they cannot, but because they will not; and this, say they, is the common cause of mens not Believing and Repenting; they cannot with this proper *cannot*, distinct from will-not; and yet that is not the reason why they do not Repent and Believe, but because they will not; now though such design the same (I believe) that I do in this discourse, yet to bring these dark words into the light, is enough to shame them. Either they that make use of this evasion mean by *cannot*, the Natural Impotency of doing the very same thing that he cannot do; or else only deny the power of doing the thing he hath an Impotency to; but grant a power, notwithstanding of doing another thing required of him different from that he wants the Natural power of doing.

I. If they mean it in the first sense, *ad idem*, that a man cannot do the same thing required, but the reason why he doth it not, is not because he cannot.

First: It is a Contradiction, as you may see in any instance keeping to the same, If a man have not the Natural power of Willing, this cannot but be a cause, yea a sufficient cause, yea the only cause of his not Willing. It would be a strange idle kind of hindrance that hinders not; a strange kind of Impotency to doing, that hinders not that doing,

that is no reaſon of the not doing. This is to ſay, A mans blindneſs is no reaſon or cauſe of his not ſeeing, or, not the only cauſe.

Secondly: It is contrary to expreſs Scriptures, to ſay, their *cannot* is no reaſon of their not Believing. We muſt ſay, that a mans Impotency of Believing, in what ſenſe ſoever we take his Impotency, is the cauſe and reaſon of his not Believing: For that Impotency that Chriſt ſpeaks of, is given as the reaſon why men Believe not on him, *John* 6. 64, 65. There are ſome of you that Believe not: For Jeſus knew from the beginning who they were that Believed not, and he ſaid, *Therefore ſaid I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it be given him of my Father*. So *John* 8 43. *Why do you not underſtand my ſpeech? Even becauſe you cannot hear my Word; you are of your Father the Devil*; that is, You are ſo wicked, you are of ſuch Deviliſh qualities.

II. If they mean by theſe words, that the fault is, notwithſtanding their Impotency, that they do not ſome other thing than that they have the Impotency to; and ſo the meaning is, He hath an Impotency to ſomthing; but his fault is, that he doth not that which he hath a power to do, and hath no Impotency at all to. Firſt: This rather confirms what I am ſaying, yea overgoe's me quite, as you will after ſee. Secondly: This is no more to the purpoſe, than to ſay,

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A blind man is too blame for not hearing, because his Impotency to seeing, doth not hinder his hearing; yet this is apparently the chief part of the meaning of this saying, as it is applyed by those that use it.

Thirdly: This Saying leaneth upon an aiery, nice, false implyed difference or distinction; or it would have no colour of reason, which is this, between Willing, desiring, endeavouring to Repent and Believe, and Actual Believing and Repenting. But any that looks upon these actions as elicit acts of the Will (with the heart man Believeth and Repenteth) may know, this is a Contradiction. Imperate acts require another power distinct from the Will to execute them, and so may be hindered by the want of that other power, as want of Estate to give; but it is otherwise where they are not Imperated, but only Elicited. What should hinder, if a man Willed it to the prevailing degree? nay it is the thing it self, and if one could suppose such a thing possible, God would accept it without the distinct thing from it you suppose, called Repenting and Believing, while he would do it, and it is no fault of his, no want of Will, they do not follow; and to think otherwise, would be to have hard thoughts of God.

Fourthly: This leaneth upon another false foundation, that men have no Impotency at all to Willing, desiring, or endeavouring that which is good; which to

affirm, as I ſaid before, is Pelagianiſm. Yet you muſt not charge men with that doctrine that follows from their unwary obſcure ſpeeches by remote conſequence, when it may be ſaid of them, That if they ſaw it followed, they would not uſe thoſe ſpeeches, and do diſown the conſequence as not ſeeing it follow.

Thus I have, I think, ſatisfactorily made out, that Natural Impotency doth excuſe from fault. This is the firſt property of Natural Impotency, wherein it differs from Moral; I have been large in this, but will recompence it with brevity in the following.

Secondly: A ſecond property of this Natural Impotency is this, Natural Impotency (*viz.* when a man hath not the faculty of willing, or cannot do the thing if he would) would make all conditional promiſes made upon condition of doing that that men have this Impotency to do, nullities. Suppoſe the promiſe made to faln man that hath no wings, If you fly you ſhall be ſaved, would not this have been ſo far from gracious, as to be a Nullity? Yea though *Adam* had had wings, and loſt them by his ſin, from himſelf and us; as indeed I grant the caſe to be much ſo, in reſpect of original ſin between *Adam* and us: Could any man ſeriouſly give thanks for ſuch a promiſe, or ſay, It was a kind and gracious promiſe?

The ſticking to this opinion of mans Natural

tural Impotency to perform the Gospel-condition, hath driven some, otherwise learned and worthy men, to deny, Such are promises, *viz.* If men Believe and Repent, they shall be saved; and to use this argument for their opinion, that if they be, they are no more gracious than the Law. I must say, their argument is unanswerable, if a man now have no more power to fulfil the Gospel-condition, than to make all his sins undone. Nay, there are no degrees in Impossibilities or total Cannots. It is no more of grace to say to a man, If thou wilt run a mile I will give, *&c.* if he cannot, than if thou wilt run a thousand. To say, men have not the Natural power to perform the Gospel-condition, is to set forth God as one that mocketh; and to say, He will encrease their misery if they do not, is to set him forth as doing (*horresco referens*) worse than mocking. What fearful things are extreams?

Thirdly: While there is this Natural Impotency of obedience to a command or performing the condition of a promise, men that obey not, or fall short of the thing promised, will never repent of, or befool themselves for it; for that which they could not help if they would never so much. I forbear aggravating this opinion, as having load enough on its back already to make any considerate man stand off lest it fall on him.

Now I come to speak of the Moral or Ethical Impotency. It is a thing as quite

different from Natural Impotency as can be almoſt ſuppoſed, as I ſhall ſhew you. They agree in nothing, but only in the thing that is the reaſon of the Metaphor borrowed from Natural Impotency, to expreſs this by; which is this, That as a lame man cannot walk, a blind man ſee, or dead ariſe without a Miracle; ſo neither can theſe ever Repent and Believe without ſome wonderful help from Heaven, though upon another account it cannot be done, and not becauſe they want the Natural power of doing it.

Moral Impotency is when a man hath the Natural power, can do the thing, in reſpect of his Natural powers, but will not; and not only ſo, but cannot obtain of himſelf to will it; though yet he hath the Natural power of obtaining this of himſelf, elſe it would be a Natural Impotency; as, a Fool hath not the Natural power to obtain of himſelf to will a thing, hath not the right Natural uſe of his faculties: So (as all agree) a man hath not the Natural power of willing his own miſery, as his miſery; or of nilling his own happineſs: his ſoul is not framed capable of theſe things; and therefore theſe things come not within Morality; neither are, nor poſſibly can be matter of a ſerious command, or ſerious prohibition.

Theſe expreſſions, *à ſe impetrare non poteſt ut velit*; he cannot find in his heart to chuſe it, cannot obtain of himſelf to will it, ſeem the fitteſt to repreſent it to you by.

And

And it is not from any Natural defect that he cannot find in his heart, cannot obtain of himself to will it, but from his Wickedness, his Pride, Covetuousness, Malice, Voluptuousness, and such things as prevail with his will in a Moral way, to keep it fast to them, *John* 5. 44 *How can you Believe, that seek honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only*? That is (as you may see, comparing *cap.* 12. *v.* 43.) *This hinders you from giving your selves up to me and my obedience, your Pride, your affectation of applause, your care to keep up your Repute amongst your Friends and Acquaintants.* This Impotency is the same with that which a man means when he saith, *I cannot break my own Legs*; not but that he can do it if he would, but he is so resolved to the contrary upon some arguments that prevail with him, that all that you can say, cannot perswade him to do it.

This Impotency is a rational thing, so far as that may be called rational which is done upon reasons, but inconsiderable and slight reasons, and upon fallacious arguments and grounds; and such as he doth, or might know to be fallacious, did he make due use of his reason: Else it would be a Natural Impotency, and a man could be no more blamed for it, than you can blame a man for his antipathy to Cheese, that is not chosen upon any arguments. Now in this sense a *Cannot* and *Will not* are all one; they do not

not differ *specie*, in kind; only, in degree: It is a higher degree of volition or chusing; you may call it Wilfulness, stubbornness, Obstinacy, Moral Impotency, all these signifie the same. *Deut.* 21. 18. *If a man have a stubborn Son that will not obey, the voyce of his Father*, Stubbornness is only a Will not obey, not a Cannot in the propereſt sense as opposed to Will not; only a higher degree of will not, but of the same species. In this sense are apparently these and such Scriptures to be understood; Can the blackmore change his skin? so, He that is accustomed to evil cannot do well. The first Cannot here is Natural, and so without fault; he cannot change his skin if he would never so fain, and therefore a command to change it would not oblige: But the second is the Moral Cannot, *Gen.* 37. 4. Josephs *Brethren hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him*; that is, through envy, not but that they could if they would. *Luke* 11. 7. *Trouble me not, my door is shut, and my Children in bed, I cannot rise to give thee.* This cannot is a will-not upon such reasons, and is so explained in the words following; Though he will not rise; yet because of his Importunity he will rise and give him whatsoever he needeth. In this sense the Carnal mind is Enmity against God, and is not subject to the Law of God; neither indeed can be, in this Moral sense, And God giveth us power in this sense (observe, I do not say only in this sense, but mostly

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as the chief meaning, for ſomthing I could ſay, but I muſt not intermix things aliene) not by giving new faculties; but by cauſing us to will, and do of his own good pleaſure. *Phil.* 3. 13. And in this ſenſe we pray, *Create in us a clean heart, and renew a right Spirit within us. No man can come to me except the Father draw him*, meaneth no more than that, *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life*, only it may denote a more ſtrong overflowing ſtream of the will, and a reſolved refuſal of him; or, to ſpeak more exactly, it denotes the Will-not with a *modus*; and modes do not differ really from the things modified; It denotes the Will-not with this wicked modification, that this will-not will always continue, unleſs God do by ſome ſuper-effluence of his grace make them willing of unwilling; not but that they had the Natural power or faculty of willing it, or could if they would without that adventitious drawing; but they were ſo reſolved againſt ſubmitting to him, that they could not obtain to will the contrary; yea this *Cannot* was through their own choyce upon ſome reaſons like that, *Luke* 14. 20. *He had Married a Wife and could not come*: The deſign of the parable is to ſhew what hinders men from coming to Chriſt, and how inexcuſable they are in refuſing ſuch offers; the meaning therefore is not, that his new Wife did cling about him, or tye his legs that he could not, (for this would have excuſed;) but that he choſe to ſtay and entertain himſelf with his

his new Marr'ed Wife, as more deſirable to him than the Feaſt. And ſo, one muſt go ſee his Oxen, and another his Farme. The meaning is, it is ſo far from being an indifferent thing to me, whether I leave my Wife to go or not, that I ſo quite præponderate the other way, that I cannot ſo much as obtain of my ſelf to parley about it, to debate upon it; my reaſon is ſo great, that you may well excuſe me; have me excuſed. But this will admit of no excuſe, there is no ſufficient reaſon can be given for forſaking the Fountain of Living Waters, to go to broken Ciſterns; and this they did, or might have known.

I could here, if there was need, demonſtrate further to you, that it is impoſſible there ſhould be any thing but Will in this Impotency; for if there was, it would excuſe ſo far. But this will appear more fully in going on, and I ſuppoſe I may ſpare my ſelf that labour: For to make this fully intelligible to you, is I think enough to prove it. And therefore I will repreſent it further to you. The Angels in Heaven have an Impotency of Sinning (if I may call the Moral perfection an Impotency, which is moſt properly to be called the Moral power, being a holy rectitude of Will, and the power oppoſite to the Moral Impotency, *in eodem genere morali*; and ſo is of the ſame general nature, and fit to explain this by: for it is a *Moral Cannot* ſin, not a *Natural*, for they have the Natural power of ſinning, can ſin if they would; elſe it would

not

not be laudable Morally, no more than it is, that a Beaſt cannot ſin) they have ſuch a Moral rectitude and goodneſs, they cannot obtain of themſelves to Will it; but you may as well go and perſwade a man in his right mind to put his hand into the fire: they neither will nor (in the ſenſe explained) can Will it, nor dare, (the Angel durſt not bring a railing accuſation) and that for ſubſtantial and weighty reaſons. This calls to mind thoſe expreſſions, *How can I do this evil.* And *Rev.* 2.2. *Thou can'ſt not bear thoſe that are evil.* And 1 *John* 3. 9. *He cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God*; and, Gods people *are dead and Crucified unto the World and to ſin.* Which laſt words ſhew, that if you will have *dead* in Scripture always to ſignifie a want of Natural power, you muſt ſay that Gods people have not a Natural power to ſin, cannot ſin if they would.

I dare ſay farther, you have ſuch apprehenſions of God, as of Angels, and of good men (I mean Analogically) though you ſhould in anger ſay, you have not; However I am ſure, you ought to have ſuch apprehenſions; for otherwiſe you have unworthy and ſinful apprehenſions, and contrary to Scripture, which ſpeaketh in ſuch a way as God muſt ſpeak, or elſe could not be underſtood by us, in ſpeaking of Himſelf. I ſay, you have ſuch apprehenſions of God, as you borrow from theſe things amongſt men, when you thank God for keeping Covenant and Promiſe; you apprehend, He hath the Na-

Natural power of destroying you when he will, notwithstanding his promise; else you cannot possibly thank him for keeping Covenant. You might indeed admire him under a contrary Conception; but not thank him; for Thanks, in the very formal Conception of it, is for doing some thing that one had a Natural power to do otherwise.

If any should conceive that his Promise, like some kind of Charm, did take away his Natural power of being provoked to will or do otherwise; it would be a very sinful apprehension; for, during such a Conception, a man could not give thanks for his keeping promise, unless in jest. You have apprehensions of his keeping promise, as not coming from not having Natural power to do otherwise; but you conceive of him as being hindered from destroying his people, notwithstanding their great provocations, and from dealing falsly in his Covenant, upon the account of something in him, that you conceive of Analogically to Moral virtue and goodness, even Justice, and Faithfulness, and Truth, *Gen. 9. 16. I will look upon the Bow in the Cloud, that I may remember my Covenant*; Implying, he hath power to destroy the Earth again with a Flood, notwithstanding his Covenant.

Now I will, according as I promised, shew you the different properties of this *Moral Impotency* from Natural; and it is contrary in every thing to Natural, which shews they are contrary indeed. First,

First: This Moral Impotency doth not excuse from fault, or make threatnings unjust. Nay it is also in this contrary to Natural (which I would have you observe and consider well, to convince you of their great difference); That the Natural Impotency, the greater it is, by so much the more it doth lessen the fault in not obeying the command; and the less it is, by so much the more it doth greaten the fault: But the greater it is the greater is the fault, and more blameworthy, and further from excuse; and the less it is, the less faulty. For any to say, I cannot but hate the Minister that reproves me; and any that live holy lives, I cannot but wish some great fall or mischief to them; for they call my sins to my remembrance, and admonish me to leave my wicked ways; and I am resolved not to leave them; I have so firmly chosen this way, that I am resolved not to change: This is the meaning of [I cannot obtain of my self to leave this way] will any say, this is not a greater fault? If a Thief should say, Once I was almost willing to have left my course of life; but now I am resolved to stick to it, notwithstanding all Laws and dangers; and he say true, Is he not now more too blame than formerly, and less excuseable? Would not all humane Judicatures look upon that man as mad, that should say, This doth excuse, or not aggravate his fault?

Secondly: This Moral Impotency doth not

not hinder promiſes from being of Grace. This is not to mock men, to promiſe a reward, if they will do that which they have this Moral Impotency to do. Nay ſuch a promiſe is not a jot leſs gracious, than if there was all readineſs and willingneſs of mind in us to embrace it, by performing the condition; when only, choſen, wicked willfulneſs hinders. He is bound nevertheleſs to thank him; and, as the Apoſtle ſaith, Mans unbelief cannot make the Faith (meaning the Faithfulneſs) of God of none effect; ſo our wickedneſs and unthankfulneſs doth not make the Grace of God ceaſe to be Grace, and his kindneſs ceaſe to be kindneſs.

If an Act of Oblivion be made by the Prince (when the Rebels are in his power, and Juſtice ſaying, Shall I ſmite them, ſhall I ſmite them?) provided they will acknowledg their offence in ſome humble manner and ſubmit; if ſome, yea if all ſhould ſay, and that truly, We ſo hate him, notwithſtanding this kindneſs; and we ſhall be ſo ſcofted at by thoſe we have made great boaſts of our reſolvedneſs unto, and they will ſay, *Where is that mouth wherewith thou ſaid'ſt, Who is* * *Abimeleck*? that we cannot through theſe reaſons obtain of our own wilful and proud hearts to ſubmit; yet it was a great favour and kindneſs, as long as the condition was ſo eaſie to them, that they had the Natural power ſo eaſily to do it. Yea, and though they had no benefit by it, but their Condem-

* Judg. 9. 38.

damnation was increaſed. So though it may truly be ſaid of ſome, *It was good for them if they had never been born*, and *Chriſt never been born, or dyed*, and *no Law of Grace ever made*; yet all this hinders it not from being of Grace, while this falling-ſhort, was through their own wickedneſs.

Thirdly: They that through this Moral Impotency, this inſuperable obſtinacy, refuſe to yield, will befool themſelves, Was I mad! I was told and knew: What hindred me, but my own wickedneſs?

I will now ſet before you one Inſtance to make all plain, and to call the ſumme of what hath been ſaid to your mind. Suppoſe a Father hath a Son, both Vicious and Debauch't, and alſo Lame; which Lameneſs (becauſe I will foreſtall all poſſibility of exception) proceeded from ſome former wickedneſs, as, in endeavouring to kill his Father: Suppoſe his Father ſhould ſay, Thou haſt long deſerved to be diſ-inherited, and I am now about to diſ-inherit thee irrecoverably in ſelling my Land; But now Run, and I will receive thee into favour. He may reply, *Father, I thank you for nothing, this is to mock, I cannot.* And again, here is no fault in not-running, and he will never afterwards befool himſelf for, and repent of not-running, though diſ-inherited upon it: This is Natural Impotency. But now, ſuppoſe the Father ſay, *Son, thou art Vicious and Debauch't, living looſely abroad; but now live at*

home with me, and leave these Vicious courses, and I will receive thee; He hath the Moral Impotency to this, *Can the Blackmore change his skin? so he accustomed to evil, cannot do well*; and so the Son goes on in his old course, and cannot obtain of himself to do otherwise. Here notwithstanding, he ought to say, Father, I thank you, this is a kindness to condescend to such easie terms, after such great provocations; and this will not excuse him; and he will be-fool himself after, and say, *Oh that I had hearkned!*

Obj. But, Is not the whole of your discourse notoriously against the knowledg and experience of men? Cannot we say of wicked men, They would forsake their sins but cannot? and do not the best complain with *Paul, when they would do good, evil is present*, and they have a will, when yet to do good they find not? they are sure they would do more good than they do. And do you say, They do not sin in not doing those things they would, but cannot?

Ans. First: There is a willingness in wicked men to escape Condemnation, and attain Salvation; this is supposed, else God would never promise these upon a condition. Though yet they may be said indirectly, and interpretatively, to will and chuse death, in chusing those courses that lead to it, and so have their choyce, all things considered, in perishing: for they chuse rather to undergo his wrath, than to accept him on

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the tearms and conditions of his love and favour.

Secondly: They would, if it could be (and wish it might be so) have Christ, and Heaven, and their Lusts too.

Thirdly: They, or many of them, are willing to do many things for Salvation, would part with some sins they can best spare, and do some duties they have no great averseness to, and so either do leave such sins, or would actually if they really thought, Going so far would serve the turn.

Fourthly: They, or some of them, have a remiss Will to perform the whole Gospel-condition, to give up themselves to the obedience of Faith; but the actual choyce, the prevailing part of their will, is against it. *Aristotle's* Instance is pertinent to explain this by, *ad Nicom. lib.* 3. A Mariner casts his goods over-board in a Storm, to save his Life and Ship. He puts the question, Whether such actions should be called voluntary or involuntary; he calls them μικτὰς πράξεις, *mixt actions*, for (saith he) No man would cast away his goods, altogether willingly: ἑκόντες δὲ μᾶλλον ἐκούσιοις but they are (saith he) rather voluntary actions; for they are chosen and preferred by them as the wisest actions in such Circumstances. Such a man would fain have his riches preserved, and yet rather than lose his life, chuses not to keep them; resolved, though repining, to cast them away, with the prevailing choice.

And though the other weaker inclination be a will, a remiss will, or volition naturally so called, and really, being a desire upon some reasons, μετὰ λόγου ὄρεξις as *Aristotle* defines βούλησις rightly; yet Morally it may be said to be no-Will: For it is not to denominate, not being the prevailing choice, *Qui mavult, vult*, only in this sense: so that you may say They will not, in ordinary custom of speaking: For where this chusing-Will is, the imperate acts essentially follow, and are performed in some measure; or, where they do not follow, it is as much accepted by God as if they did, *e. g.* If a mans prevailing choyce be to go to the Church, he goes; If to stay at home, he stays; If to pray, he prays; to give, he gives: except there be such a hinderance as will so far excuse, as if he had done it; as, suppose the πυροσωσία should be stiff or stubborn, when the Will is not.

You see wicked men would have Christ and Heaven, and would therefore remisly (what they are convinced is the only means) Holiness of heart and life; yet the prevailing will is rather to lose happiness, than to forgoe all their lusts; to let go the offered happiness, rather than live a Spiritual Heavenly life; somthing unwilling, thus to lose all; yet, with the prevailing bent of their will, prefer this sinful course.

Fiftly: In the regenerate, the prevailing choyce of their will, is for the best Intereſt, and

and this will Denominate, they are willing in the propereſt ſenſe: there is no ſin but they habitually would have ſtrength againſt it, and no duty, but they would have ſtrength to perform it; And this will be accepted of God unto Salvation.

But yet their Will is renewed but in part, and they have much unwillingneſs to it, and will to the contrary; they do not will in ſuch a degree as they ought; and this is their ſin. They would do ſuch and ſuch difficult duties, and yet they would not; and this is a Lamentation, and ſhould be for a Lamentation. When I ſay, they *Would* in a prevailing degree, I know this cannot always be affirmed particularly *pro Hic & Nunc*, elſe they would never omit any known duty, or commit any known ſin; for, the Imperate acts would follow the Elicit.

I am ſomthing at a loſs here, how to expreſs my Conceptions, which are not very clear. But you may conceive, a Child may ſome-time diſobey, provoke his Parent, though his general and habitual bent of heart and will be, to pleaſe him. And ſo, Gods people's willingneſs to the whole, and in general, is greater than their unwillingneſs, though not in the particular Act of known ſin; elſe I could not tell how to maintain, that a Regenerate man hath the Goſpel-condition in the main, during a wilful ſin, and ſo is not unjuſtified; whereas I cannot think, ſuch a one hath quite changed

his ultimate end, and is become unſanctified, like another man for a time. Me-thinks thoſe words of the Apoſtle ſerve beſt of any I can think of, to expreſs my meaning by, which if it be not the meaning of the words, I only allude to them, *viz.* "So then, with the "mind I my ſelf ſerve the Law of God, but "with the fleſh the Law of Sin. I my ſelf, which part do I my ſelf wiſh moſt may prevail? which ſide do I take? which intereſt do I frown at and wiſh might go down? That is *I my ſelf*, my will in the propereſt ſenſe, which I prevailingly, habitually chooſe, ſo as to be moſt diſpleaſed with my unwillingneſs; and I find, I am not diſpleaſed, or not much, at my unwillingneſs to ſin.

I know it is difficult, when a mans choyce but-juſt turns the ſcale, and is not vehement to diſcern which part he prevailingly takes; And people though of great and ſtrong affections to things above, and in whom things below have very little Intereſt; yet if their Reaſon be clouded with Melancholy or otherwiſe, it is hard for them to know which is I, *I my ſelf*, and which ſide they mainly take; yet this is the way to enquire: For come to a wicked man, and he may ſay, I my ſelf ſerve the fleſh and world, and that Intereſt I am moſt careful to ſecure and maintain, whatever become of the Spirit's Intereſt; though my mind and Conſcience is for the Law of God, and ſerving of that; and

and so I have a will to do something; but the side I my self take, and am most careful it go not down, is the Flesh-interest. And to answer to *Rom.* 7. I grant that *Paul* speaks in the person of a Regenerate man, though some worthy men oppose it, and as for what they object, that he speaks of it as *Aristotle* represents his ἀκρασίης, his *Incontinent* man who is ὑπελθόντος, *below a Moral man*; it is easily made apparently unlike, if one by sin mean not gross sins, but those of daily infirmity which *Aristotle* accounted no sins; and by Flesh, mean the most subjugated, hated part of his will and affections; and by his Mind, the prevailing interest which he sided with. However there is as much said, *Gal.* 5. 17. *For the Flesh Lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that you cannot do the things which you would*; which words are confessed to speak of the Regenerate. But to Answer, First, I doubt not but the Apostle desired to be freed from many Natural Imperfections that were his sorrows and punishments for sin, and not his sins. Secondly, We must say, the reason why the Apostle or any other do not do any duty they would, is, because they do not will it enough; and what he did will in the prevailing degree he did it in some imperfect measure. But he would fain have been freed from all unwillingness, and have gotten on his Will further, but could not obtain it. And whereas he

faith, *It is no more I*; that is in the vulgar ſenſe, as to denominate, not proceeding to the choyce; for his countenanced, loved, prevailing choyce was the contrary. It was againſt his will, which was moſt ſtrictly his will; (though too much his will); and ſo God would accept it to Salvation.

Sixthly: I add this as an overplus: Was there as full a willingneſs, as our frail and naturally defective humane Nature is capable of, there could be no actual ſin; I mean ſo full a willingneſs only, as to exclude every degree of unwillingneſs. For, where the reaſon why men do not, is not at all, Becauſe in part they will not; there it muſt neceſſarily be only, Becauſe they cannot; and therefore no fault.

This is the ſum of what is here ſaid: If there be a willing mind as to the prevailing degree, to obey every command, God will in mercy accept it to Salvation. But, was there a willing mind to any thing, ſo willing as to have nothing of unwillingneſs; God would not in this caſe account ſin at all, nay though it was not done through ſome other hindrance. Thoſe that would freely give if they had it without any unwillingneſs, it will not be ſin they did not give.

You may ſee alſo by this (farther than I thought to have ſpoken) that we have the Natural power, though not of undoing the ſins we have done; yet of unſinning actual obedience for the future; elſe we ſhould not

not sin in not performing perfect actual obedience; we only want will: Which may much humble us, would we well consider it.

I shall Transcribe to you a passage out of Mr. *Fenner*'s Wilfull Impenitency, which speaks as high as the most ingrateful expression I have used, *page* 52. "*Rom* 7. 18. "I quote this place the rather (saith he) be"cause many wrest it to their own de"struction. Oh, sayes a wicked man, I "have a good will, I would, as *Paul* sayes, "but I cannot perform; Thus men misin"terpret this place, for look how far *Paul* "would, he could perform: for the will "hath *potentiam executricem*, and an Im"perative force over the man; what he did "will, he did perform; he performed it in "his heart, and tongue, and hand, *&c.* But "he would draw his will forwarder than it "was, but could not; his very will was "partly unwilling: he could not indeed per"form so much as he would; that is, he "could not draw on his will so strongly as "he would. His will was not perfectly "sanctified; no Saint in this world hath any "compleatness of will; and therefore his "performance is not perfect, because his "will is not perfect.

"I say, If thy will be converted to God, "thou art Converted, obedience ever goes "as far as the will: And therefore if thou "art willing, it is certain thou art obedient,

"*Isa.*

" *Iſa.* 1. 19. whoſoever is willing to obey, " that man does obey in ſome meaſure, be- " cauſe the Will hath power of Execution, " and the whole man at command. This is " the reaſon why Divines ſay that, The ſince- " rity of the will is the condition of the Goſ- ſpel. Thus he, *verbatim*; and *page* 86. " We never ſin againſt the Goſpel, but only " upon *Will-nots*; indeed we ſin againſt " the Law in every of our Cannots. This laſt paſſage I confeſs I do contradict, and ſo I think he doth himſelf in the paſſage before cited, and alſo in the following *page* 87. *Conſcience can never condemn us, but only upon* Will-nots.

If any ſhould yet be dubious and unſatiſfied, or contentious and quarrelſome, as indeed one may eaſily take occaſion, the faculties of the Soul being ſuch abſtruſe things;

I ſhall appeal to them though they object either on one hand, or on the other.

Firſt, To thoſe that ſhould affirm a Natural Impotency. Firſt; Dare you think that God hath promiſed to men Salvation if they do, and will puniſh them if they do not, things they cannot do, if they would never ſo fain? (*etiamſi maximè velint.*) If ſo, Can you think that an Act of Mercy, and this of Juſtice? would not this be a puniſhment for no fault? Do you not ſay that the reaſon why a Deaf man is not bound by the command of hearing, or a Poor man of giving,

ing, or the Fool by the command of understanding the Gospel, is, because they cannot do it, or else they would be bound by these general commands as others? Is not this to grant that Gods Laws oblige to obedience, only *quoad posse & nosse*, as Lawyers speak? None can possibly evade here but by saying, as some do, It is true, such Impotent people are not obliged, and the consequence (that all are by the same reason exempted from doing what they cannot do) would be good, if this was the cause or reason why men are not obliged by such general Laws; but this is not the reason, but the reason is, Because God doth not require it of them, else the blind would be as much obliged to read, and the deaf to hear, *&c.* But I would ask one thus replying, such questions, How doth he know since the Law is general, that God doth not require the deaf to hear, *&c.* but by knowing this, that God doth not require men to do what they cannot do? Again, Do you think that if God or man should require things which we cannot do, that the Law would be as equal, as a Law requiring what man can do? and would the man be as much to blame in not doing, as if he could? And why doth not God require the deaf man to hear the Minister? is there no reason of it in the Nature of things? Suppose you should have read a Command in Scripture, requiring you to forget all injuries, Would not Natural reason, and the notion you have of

Κατὰ τὸ δύνασθαι καὶ μὴ δύνασθαι

of the injustice of requiring things impossible, dictate to you to interpret such a Scripture Metaphorically, To forgive all injuries? And would you not have given this as your reason of so interpreting the words, Because a man cannot forget a great injury if he would, hath not the Natural power of so doing, the Memory not being totally subject to the Will? A man may forgive, but cannot forget, who it was that injuriously lam'd him, or put out his eye. So also if a promise had been of a great reward, If we forget all injuries, would you not give this as your reason why you cannot interpret the words according to the first and propereſt sense of the word [Forget], because if you do, no thanks could be due for such a promise; it would not be gratious but luſorious.

Secondly: Did your hearts ever reproach you, as sinning in not doing that which you could not do, or omitting that you could not but omit? Tell me, or rather your selves, When and where, and for what, (I except Melancholy people out of this Appeal, for some of those I have known to have had great trouble of mind for things they could not help) yea though your Natural Impotency came from sin, as I think all Natural dulneſs of understanding, and blindneſs, and lameneſs of Body, do. Suppose you had lived in a place where you never heard of Christ and the Gospel, till you came to great years; And if as soon as you did you

you had yielded to the Goſpel, Do you think your hearts would have reproached you that you received Chriſt no ſooner? I know you will anſwer, No. If I ask you why, I know you can give no anſwer but this, Becauſe you could not; you wanted ſomthing that was Naturally neceſſary to enable you to that act, *viz.* an objective evidence. But do not your hearts reproach you for refuſing him ſo long? you will ſay, Yea Now you are very ignorant of right reaſoning, if you cannot draw the concluſion.

Secondly, I appeal to thoſe on the other Extream that ſhould object againſt this Moral Impotency, as either that there is no ſuch thing, or if there be that it would excuſe.

Firſt: Art thou as inclinable to good as evil, to pleaſe God as to pleaſe thy Fleſh and Senſes? Canſt thou in this Moral ſenſe obtain of thy ſelf to chuſe good and refuſe evil? why then doſt thou not? Why doſt thou pray † him, to incline thy heart to his Teſtimonies? what need haſt thou or any elſe of the Spirit's help? doſt thou not ſee multitudes going on reſolvedly in wicked ways, notwithſtanding all rebukes, engageing themſelves more deeply againſt God and holineſs, that thou thinkeſt, unleſs God work ſome wonderful way by his Spirit, they can never obtain of themſelves to leave thoſe ways they are wedded to, though nothing hinders but their own choyce? Again, Will you not grant that it may in ſome true ſenſe

† See *Anſtin* well urging this, *Ep.* 107. *ad Vitalem.*

sense be said, That no man can live so innocently as not to need Christ's death for pardon of his Omissions & Commissions? Now consider, and you will find, that, while you allow, that no mans sinneth in not doing the things he hath a Natural Impotency to, you can in no sense grant it true, while you deny this Moral Impotency, or deny it to be one kind or sort of Impotency.

Secondly: Thou goest on, or hast gone on, in such sins as thy heart is privy unto, and couldst not of a long time obtain of thy self to leave such courses; Doth not thy Conscience tell thee, it would be just with God to Condemn thee; and with men (if great crimes) to punish thee for them? If a Thief, Robber, or Murtherer should say (and say true) I was so resolved, I could not obtain of my self for all the Laws of God and man to leave my wicked wayes, is this an excuse? Is he not justly yet punishable? would'st not thou punish him if Judg? would'st thou not do unworthily to let him escape upon this pretence, though true? whatever thou mayst say against this in words to confound; yet it appears plain, though against thy will; It is to dispute against the Sun's light, when we know it is so, though we cannot tell how. One may as well dispute against motion, as that Antient did, because so difficult to tell what it is. If he should puzle you in saying, It was from my Pride and Covetousness, or Enmity and Hatred, that I could

could not obtain of my self to leave those courses; how could I help it but obey my Lusts? you are yet sure, this doth not excuse, and so are all Lawyers, yea and all men in the world; but this Impotency is of a different sort from that which doth excuse. The Will's hinderance by wicked habits, and the habits themselves, so far as sinful, are voluntary things. Covetousness cannot be an unwilling thing, or Pride, or Enmity; no man is an Enemy to another against his Will. Do not mis-interpret these words, I mean his whole will; else I know he may be an Enemy to a man, and Covetous against his will; when his will is divided, and partly for it, and partly against it upon contrary Reasons, as it is often even sensible in the best, though their darling, countenanced will and choyce, is against it.

Let any man tell me (and I will impartially consider it, yea, I desire help here) what a Vertuous or Vitious habit is, as different or distinct from an inclination of the will, which is *appetitus totius suppositi*, the Appetite of the man, as other meerly sensitive inclinations are not, that do not λόγου μετέχουσι, that are not chosen upon reasons, as other appetitions or aversations are not.

If any man should have some sensitive Appetite altogether against his will, it would not be Covetousness, or Pride, or Intemperance; and if it should in some little degree draw his will to it, yet so far as it is against his

his will, it is without blame; and only ſo much as it hath the conſent of the will, or the will doth not diſſent enough, he is culpable; ſo Enmity, if a man ſhould have any particular averſation to another man or woman (like that, *Non amo te, Sabidi*) that is not choſen upon any reaſon, and ſo is not voluntary at all, it would not be called Enmity univocally and properly. Vertuous and Vitious habits, are I think (I would not be over-confident where, for any thing I know, I go alone) only a continued confirmed inveterate inclination of the Will.

A man that hath choſen Riches to purſue them by all means direct or indirect as his end, wherein he places his felicity, is a Covetous man, and, continuing this choyce, is habitually Covetous. Did he now chuſe God for his ultimate end, and conſtantly and reſolvedly will holineſs and the pleaſing of *God*, he would be habitually holy. If any ſhould have a Conception of ſuch habits, as things that are not volitions, or, which is all one, inclinations of the will, but diſtinct from them *ſpecie*, and things that men could not put off if they would, it would be an erroneous Conception; for they would not then be Vertuous or Vitious; and *God* would not require the putting them off, and it would not be the duty of ſuch men to will what is good, if they could not, had not the Natural power, to will good, notwithſtanding ſuch habits. Therefore *Ariſtotle*, who

was

was a man *acute* to admiration in such things, seems to sleep, and forget what he had proved, That all Vertue and Vice is voluntary, *Ad Nicom. Lib.* 3. when he saith, οὐκ ὁμόιως δὲ αἱ πράξεις ἑκούσιαί εἰσι, καὶ δι ἕξεις, that is in effect, Vitious habits are not to be called voluntary in the ordinary sense; for, saith he, A Vicious man cannot if he would, ἃ μὴν ἐὰν γε βάλληται, do well, or otherwise than according to these habits.

I have told you the meaning of the Scripture; *he accustomed to do evil, cannot do well*: he can if he would; but he cannot Morally obtain of himself to Will it. But *Aristotle* saith, he cannot if he would: but he saith, Such habits are yet to be called ἑκούσιοι, or voluntary, because those Acts were voluntary, whereby they brought them on themselves; and he brings this Instance to shew in what sense they are voluntary, When a man hath brought a Disease on himself by Intemperance, he may be said to be sick of a voluntary Disease, though he would fain be freed from it and cannot. Any one may see that, if the case was so, you could not call them vitious habits *formaliter*, and voluntary *formaliter* and properly: but only sinful and voluntary figuratively, originally, *effectivè*, as every punishment of sin is, because volnntary sins were the cause of them. If a man should say, I would not at all be Covetous, and chuse the world for my chief good, but I do choose it; Would it not be a

Contradiction? And if such a thing was possible, would it not be far from being sin and punishable? You may see by this, that such habits are only this Moral Impotency, the wilfulness it self under another consideration.

If any should yet be unsatisfied, and think Vitious habits are not Elicited, but Imperated; Let him reduce them to what notion he will, and it will come all to one for Argument: for he must then say of them, as of all other Imperate things, that they are subject to the will wholly, or so far as they are not, they are sinless; and that God doth not require us to put them off.

If you will have them ἄλογα, and meerly sensitive inclinations, then they are not Vitious any more than they are consented to, or not enough disliked; As suppose you should call a great Thirst (brought upon a man by excessive drinking) Drunkenness. And again, either they take away the Natural power of Willing (*i. e.* make him no Rational Creature) and then they would excuse; or they cause that a man cannot Will good if he would (pardon this Contradiction, for I speak it *docendi causâ*) and this would excuse indeed. A thing impossible cannot be a Moral fault. Or they only hinder the effects of the Will, the Imperate acts; and then they so excuse, that God would accept his Will without those Imperate acts. But these would be irrational notions of Moral ha-

habits: for let any man consider, and he may easily see (I think) that they are not different *specie* from volitions, that is, inclinations of the Will; but comprehend in their notion, some kind of radication and continuance of volition, that we cannot well understand. Doubtless they are not a-kin to other habits, which only enable the subject facily and dextrously to do the act; for a good man could as facily and dextrously commit a sin as another man, but will not.

Now to let you see further a necessity of this distinguishing, consider how the Antients were, for want of this distinguishing, puzled to answer the *fallacious* arguments for the *Pelagian* ἀναμαρτησία, or perfection in this life, (while yet the Orthodox Fathers held in the main as we ordinarily do, as may be made fully apparent). *Pelagius* maintained amongst his other errours, this, That a man in this life can keep the Law perfectly, and meant it Morally in the sense wherein I oppose it: his Arguments were these * which prove it only Naturally possible, *viz.* To deny a mans power to keep the Law perfectly, is to accuse God of a double Ignorance, in not knowing our weakness, or in not knowing what he commands us; or it is to accuse him of Injustice in commanding what man cannot do.

* Epist Pelag. *ad* Demetriadem: *Duplici ignorantia accusamus Deum*, &c. *Tom* 4. *Hieron.* It is *Pelagius* his Epistle, though through the Ignorance of former times, placed with, and read amongst *Jerom*'s as B. *Usher* and others observe.

Or thus, as * *Catabulus* (by which feign'd name, *Jerom* repreſents *Pelagius*, as by *Atticus* himſelf) formes the Argument; Either God hath given poſſible or unpoſſible commands: If poſſible, it is in our power to keep them: if unpoſſible, we ſin not in not-doing them ſince we cannot: And ſo it follows that, whether God have given commands poſſible or impoſſible, a man can live without ſin.

* Hieron. lib. 1. adverſ. Pelag. *Aut poſſibilia mandata Deus dedit aut impoſſibilia. Si poſſibilia, in noſtra poteſtate eſt, ea facere: Si impoſſibilia, nec in hoc rei ſumus ſi non facimus quod non poſſumus. Ac per hoc, ſive poſſibilia ſive impoſſibilia Deus dedit mandata, poteſt homo ſine peccato eſſe.*

Auguſtin (*Lib. 2. de peccat. merit. & remiſs. cap. 6.*) endeavours to anſwer this difficulty, and affirmeth it as undoubted, that God commandeth no man any thing which he cannot do. Therefore he ſaith in Anſwer, *that a man can live without ſin through Grace and by Gods help.* But this doth not anſwer the difficulty at all, unleſs he will affirm, that no man doth ſin except God give him this Grace; that is, except God by his Grace make him that he do not tranſgreſs the Law; which is in effect to ſay, Man doth not ſin; except God make him actually not to ſin, which would be to come to *Pelagius* at the back-door, and to go beyond *Pelagius*, and hold, That it is impoſſible any man ſhould ſin at all.

Jerom endeavours to anſwer this, but more palpably ſpoyls all for want of diſtinguiſhing,

guiſhing, He alſo maintains as undoubted amongſt all Chriſtians, That God commandeth nothing but what man can do, and yet maintaineth that no man can perfectly keep all the Commandements, which is good ſenſe if we diſtinguiſh, but, without diſtinguiſhing, an expreſs contradiction. But he truſts to this weak Evaſion to ſalve it (*Lib.* 1. *adverſus Pelag* : *Vides quòd Deus poſſibilia juſſerit, & tamen nullum poſſe*, &c.) His commands are poſſible (ſaith he going on) becauſe ſome men can keep one part and ſome another of the commands, but yet none can keep all; and adds, therefore it is not the duty of ſingle men to keep them all: and ſo God commands nothing but what we can do; But *Auguſtin* is expreſs againſt this of *Jerom*, *Serm.* 191. *de Tempore* * and calls it Blaſphemy, to ſay, that God commands any thing that men in particular cannot do, but only men in general.

* *Execramur etiam blaſphemiam eorum, qui dicunt Impoſſibile aliquid homini a Deo eſſe præceptum, & mandata Dei non à ſingulis, ſed ab omnibus in commune poſſe ſervari.*

Neither is there, I think, to be found one of the Antients, accounted Orthodox, that doth maintain in the ſtrict ſenſe oppoſed, that God commandeth men what they cannot do, but all abhorred it as an opinion laying an high Accuſation on God, till many hundred years after this age of *Auguſtin*:

But at laſt * *Bernard* being preſſed with this difficulty, doth (yet any one may ſee unwillingly) fly to this, that God may command what man cannot do, and doth mean it of a Natural power. But he doth it in theſe words, God may command *nimis*, too much. And in giving his reaſon for it, he doth not fly to that, that men once had power, or that men think they have power, which it is likely he would have done, had he not thought them invalid; But he gives this reaſon for it, that God may command too much, even that which men cannot do, To humble them. But this is but a very defective humiliation that this can cauſe: for though it can cauſe grief and ſorrow, and anger, that God ſhould be ſo ſevere to require what we cannot do; yet it cannot cauſe Repentance; for it is eſſentially neceſſary to Repentance, that the man could have done otherwiſe. And yet for all this * *Bernard* would fain compound the matter, and not ſay that God requires what men cannot do, and offers to deny it on this condition, that they will grant that men cannot do all that God requires, and, ſaith he, Who dare arrogate to himſelf that which *Paul* had not attained? which is no Contradiction, though it be vertually to ſay, No man can do all that he can do, but good ſenſe with the diſtinction I have explained; Yea, it is ſo obviouſly apparent, that a man's culpable Impotency only lyeth in his diſabi-

lity

* who lived 700 years after this. *Serm. 2. in vigil. Rom.*

* *Super Cant. Serm. 50.*

lity to do that which he hath the Natural power to do, that I wonder it is no more taken notice of.

Councels are called againſt *Pelagius*, and make many worthy, pious determinations, but any one may ſee are perplexed what to ſay againſt *Pelagius* in this caſe; and all that was determined about this particular, was againſt affirming (which *Pelagius* had done) that any man lives ſo Innocently as to have no need to ſay, *forgive us our Debts*. Yet they determine, that a man can by the Grace of God live without ſin. And the Orange Councel againſt *Pelagius* determines, that all Baptized ones, Chriſt helping and co-operating * can, and ought to fulfil all things neceſſary to Salvation, if they would labour faithfully. But any one may ſee, though theſe Councels meant well and Orthodoxly as will appear to any peruſing their determinations; yet the difficulty remains unanſwered, and will do ſo for ever, without this Diſtinction. For they rightly maintained, as all the Ancient Fathers before them, that no man ought to do more than he can do; And therefore without diſtinguiſhing, it cometh to all one for the anſwering the difficulty, whether the Grace they ſpeak of be given, or not given. For ſuppoſe it be affirmed that this Grace is given to men; Then either they can obey perfectly, ſo as to need no pardon; and this they abhorred the affirming of: or if they cannot with this

Council. Milevit. Paleſtin.

Arauſicum.

* *Debent & poſſunt.*

Grace given, obey perfectly, so as to have no need of pardon, or Christs satisfaction; then they are Innocent, and sin not, in not living perfectly, and so need no pardon in not obeying perfectly, it being no fault not to obey perfectly, since they Cannot obey perfectly. Again, suppose it be affirmed, that this grace is not given to men to obey perfectly, but only their meaning was, That God could, if he had so pleased, have given men such Grace as might inable them to live without sin, but did not. Then they were not bound to live without sin, and so were, or might be perfect still; As a man that is tyed by Sickness to his Bed, can by the help and assistance of God, go to the Church, *viz. When God shall so raise him up*; yet till God do so first raise him up, he is not bound to go, needs no pardon for not going.

Therefore, when all is said, we must distinguish of man's Power and Impotency, so as we may truly say, A man can in one sense, without Grace, obey perfectly, hath the Natural faculty and power to do it, or he could not be obliged to it by the Law; (the Law would be no law to him, no more than the general command of hearing the Word is a Law, or Obligatory to a man Deaf; and the effect of Grace, is not the giving this power, else we might say, A man could not sin unless God gave him Grace:) And also, that we may say truly; A man can-

cannot in another ſenſe obey perfectly, nor do any good thing without Grace, *viz.* Morally; his Wickedneſs, his Unwillingneſs, which is his Moral Impotency hindering. And every man underſtands this, though he know not how to expreſs it, as you will perceive by asking any man, lamenting his Omiſſions or Commiſſions, whether he could not have avoided thoſe ſins, though God did not give him that Grace to avoid them eventually. When any man is lamenting his long refuſal of Chriſt, he knoweth in ſome ſenſe he could have done otherwiſe; God gave him help and power enough naturally-neceſſary (yea, few or rather none that enjoy the Goſpel, but they can ſay *more than enough*, elſe he could not befool himſelf for thus refuſing mercy; Though God did not give him Grace ſooner to take away his reſiſtance, and unwillingneſs, and ſo to cauſe him actually and eventually to turn from ſin to God; and yet in ſome ſenſe he could not do otherwiſe; God not giving him Grace ſooner, that would eventually take away his unwillingneſs, and cauſe him actually to chuſe Mercy on the terms of it.

I may add here, How this diſtinction doth wonderfully ſerve to reconcile the Doctrine of the Ancients to themſelves, and

and one another, * All men verſed in their writings, know and confeſs, that all the Fathers, and the whole Church (*nemine contradicente*) of the pureſt ages, next after the Apoſtles, after a Controverſie was moved concerning it, as in the ſecond and third Century, did maintain free Will, as a foundation-principle of all Religion againſt the *Manichees* and other Hereticks, that denyed it, (and indeed the * following ages did alſo maintain it, whatever any ſay to the contrary.)

* They maintained not only that the Will was free from co-action, and force; but that it had a freedom from any Natural neceſſity of chuſing or refuſing. And it is apparent, that where the will hath only a freedom from co-action; but not a Natural liberty of both chuſing and refuſing, *e. g.* As in Willing the ultimate end, happineſs; or Nilling it; It is not in ſuch things capable of command or prohibition, and ſo not capable of Virtue or Vice, whatever ſome late School-men and others ſay.

* *Ipſa ratio quemlibet noſtrum quærentem vehementer anguſtat, ne ſic defendamus gratiam ut liberum arbitrium auferre videamur; rurſus nec liberum arbitrium ſic aſſeramus, ut ſuperbâ impietate ingrati Dei gratiæ judicemur*, Aug. Lib. 2. *de peccat*, Merit. c. 18. *Si non eſt Dei gratia quomodo ſalvat mundum? Et, ſi non eſt liberum arbitrium, quomodo judicat mundum?* Ep. 46. *ad* Valentin. *Nihil tam in noſtrâ poteſtate quam ipſa voluntas eſt. Voluntas noſtra nec voluntas eſſet, niſi eſſet in noſtrâ poteſtate; porro quia eſt in noſtra poteſtate, libera eſt.* Aug. de lib. arb. lib. 3. c. 2. Hieron. Ep. ad Cteſiphont. *Fruſtra Blaſphemas, & ignorantium auribus ingeris, Nos liberum arbitrium condemnare, damnetur ille qui damnat.*

Now

Autor *lib. Hypognoſticôn* (which was not *Auſtin*, but an Ancient writer againſt the *Pelagians* a little after *Auſtin*) ſaith, *Quisquis negaverit liberum arbitrium, Catholicus non eſt.* Aug. lib. de Fid. cont. Manic. *Quis non clamet, Stultum eſſe præcepta dare ei, cui liberum non eſt quod præcipitur facere? Et Iniquum eſſe, cum damnare cui non fuit poteſtas juſſa complere.* But you ſhall find none of the Ancients ſaying, that it is unjuſt for God to require of men what their ſtubborn or morally inflexible wickedneſs of their Wills only hinders them from doing; or what they cannot find in their hearts to do; or what they are ſo wickedly bent not to do, that except God take away this reſiſtency of Will by his Grace, they will never do; which is the Moral or wicked Impotency, I have explained.

Now it is a common anſwer of || learned men, that it is true, They did ſo, but yet their judgments herein are not much to be regarded, becauſe they (ſay they) contradict themſelves: For thoſe very Authors that lived before *Pelagius*, had not that occaſion to ſpeak largely and exactly of the neceſſity of Grace, none being ſo boldly wicked as to deny it, till he, (as *Vincentius Lirinenſis* obſerves,) yet when they have occaſion, they ſpeak as high as any for the neceſſity of Grace, and of mens inſuperable wickedneſs, and how that without Chriſt and his Spirit, and Grace, we can do nothing good; and of Gods working in us to will and to do of his good pleaſure.

|| *Centur. Magdeburg. Sculter. Medul. Par.*

I grant it is apparent that thoſe more Ancient Fathers, do generally, as is ſaid, thus

thus * ſpeak, *viz.* of our Impotency to God, and for the neceſſity of Grace; But am confident they do not in ſenſe contradict themſelves, no more than I, but meant generally the ſame that I do, (and could eaſily make it appear) *viz.* That men have the Natural power of Will, but were far from denying the Morally inſuperable wicked willingneſs of it without Grace; And now I muſt leave it to your Judgments and Cenſures, Whether I contradict my ſelf or no.

* You may find many occaſionable ſhort expreſſions demonſtrably to argue their judgments in this particular, againſt the *Pelagian* way, in theſe Authors following, though cenſured, as ſpeaking too high for Free Will, and in almoſt any other of the Ancients before *Pelagius*, viz. *Juſt. Mart. Ferenæus. Tertul. Arnob. Cypr. Lact. Athanaſ. Baſil. Ambr.*

There are many learned men, pretend with great confidence, that this Diſtinguiſhing is to no purpoſe; and that men are not too blame, if there be any preſent Impotency at all on men to the immediate duty, be it what it will, or call it what you will, Willingneſs, Wickedneſs, Moral Impotency, for It will excuſe, ſay they, as well as Natural; and therefore contend, that Except God by his Grace give to men, over and beſide their Natural power, ſome kind of *æquilibrium*, or equal-inclination of their Will to good and bad, they would not be too blame for diſobeying the Goſpel; this they call a ſecond power, and it is the ſame they mean

mean by their Preventing and Subſequent Grace, as appears when they explain them, and they pretend that this Grace doth work; and that this is all that Grace doth work; for it doth not (ſay they) encline the Will any farther than by giving it a power to encline either way. Now I greatly diſlike this Notion, and this alſo muſt either fall, or the notion of Moral Impotency, and what hath been ſaid of it, falls; as not ſtanding in any ſtead, but excuſing as well as the Natural. I ſhall therefore ſearch more narrowly into it, and alſo into what can be ſaid any way, that I can think of, againſt what is here propounded.

I wiſh any Oppoſer was now here (for I would impartially know the truth) that would ſoberly tell me what he would have God do to wicked men, to make them without excuſe, if he pretend that this is not enough for this end, that they have the Natural faculties, and promiſes, and threatnings, and providences afflicting or proſperous; that is an object intelligible, fitted and ſuited objectively to work this great change of heart and will:

I am confident ſuch a one could only name theſe five things with any ſhew of reaſon; and he that can name a ſixth, *erit mihi parvus Apollo*, would do more than ever was done yet.

Firſt; I would have God give a man more of the Natural power and faculty of chuſing

chuſing good, and refuſing evil, that he may be inexcuſable. But this is irrational; He hath power of willing good, and if a third or fourth power, yea, if ten times as much power of willing good was given him, it would be all one; For this is no reaſon at all of his not willing good, becauſe he hath not the Natural power to will it, elſe it would excuſe; but he will not chuſe it: And they that do chuſe good, and refuſe evil, have not more of this Natural faculty, are not more men, are not in this ſenſe further from Natural fools than other men.

Secondly; Or I would have God give him more of the Goſpel, ſend more Miniſters, and awakening providences; yea, ſend ſome from the Dead. But this was well anſwered, They have *Moſes* and the Prophets, that was enough to make them inexcuſable, and theſe under the Goſpel have more than ſo, more than the Old Teſtament.

Thirdly; I would have God to make them actually willing, that they may be inexcuſable. But this is a contradiction, and it is to ſay. Wicked men and Devils do not ſin, except God actually make them not to ſin. And yet this is the meaning of ſuch paſſages or they are not ſenſe; It doth not excuſe for God to give the faculties of willing (which is the power of chuſing it) except he give them alſo preventing Grace; that is, make them willing actually. Indeed when all

all is ſaid, you muſt ſay, or ſay worſe, that, That Grace, concerning which the controverſie is, lyeth, in making men actually willing, as diſtinct from giving power of Willing, call it ſecond or third power, or what you will, and the deſign of what I ſay here, is not to oppoſe this, but to prove it, as you will ſee in going on; but only I am ſhewing here that Gods denying of this, doth not excuſe men, ſo as it can be ſaid, they do not ſin in not obeying the Goſpel.

Or Fourthly; I would have him make them to be without temptation to ſin, that they may be without excuſe. But will not your Servant be without excuſe in Robbing you, unleſs he had no temptation to it? this is an unreaſonable demand; it is enough that God promiſes a far greater good than that they deprive themſelvs of by obedience, and threatens a far greater evil to them ſinning, than that they incur by their obedience. Would you have no ſelf-denyal in the world? Many obey God, that have greater temptations to diſobedience in thoſe things wherein they obey, than thoſe have that diſobey him in ſuch things.

Fifthly; Or I would have God make them leſs actually unwilling to good, and take off from them much of this Moral Impotency of choſen reſolvedneſs to go on in ſinful ways (which is in part to ſanctifie them, and to make them in part actually willing to deny themſelves, as any one may eaſily

eaſily underſtand) and then they will be too blame, and be guilty of ſin if they obey not.

Firſt; Suppoſe God do not this (as we are certain he doth not to all) yet are not you and all men in the world ſure, This doth not excuſe? Elſe the moſt incorrigible and wilfull offenders would be moſt ſinleſs and excuſable. Can any man in earneſt ſay that a man is not bound to leave his evil ways, and that he doth not ſin in going on in them, while he is fully and peremptorily reſolved to go on in them? Yet this ſeemeth apparently to be the meaning of many learned men in pleading for an indifferency of Will.

Secondly; What way is there poſſible to cauſe a man to leave off this wilfulneſs, to put off this Vitious habit, which he hath the Natural power to put off if he would, that is threatned enough, and promiſed enough, but ſome way moving a volition, by ſome way cauſing him to deſire the good, and diſlike the evil?

If you ſhall ſay, I would have him take away the Vitious habits, you hide your meaning in obſcure words, or you mean, I would have him not only give him the power of willing the contrary, which he hath; but alſo ſome way make his Will encline to the other way, that he may be inexcuſable.

Thirdly; Do not you uſe to Object, that this would be to deſtroy the freedom of mans

mans will, and ſo his humane Nature, to cauſe the volition any other way than by giving the power of Willing? For if God may by his Spirit in ſome way to us unknown, diſtinct from meerly propounding the object (which he doth where the Goſpel is preached without difference) without deſtroying mans freedom, take away in part mans great Wilfulneſs or Unwillingneſs to good; why may he not quite and totally (or however to the prevailing degree) take away thus by his Spirit his Unwillingneſs to Good, and cauſe man to Will or chuſe Good, without deſtroying his Freedom?

Do not now put this all off with theſe common words unexplained (which diſtinction may have a good ſenſe, if rightly explained), *viz*: God giveth all men Preventing Grace, elſe they would be in no fault, and upon their right uſe of that, he giveth them Subſequent Grace. I will ſhew you that theſe words do but hide your meaning; and that by ſubſequent, you mean no more than by your preventing Grace, and by preventing Grace, no more then the faculty or power of willing and obeying, if one would; you make the ſubſequent Grace to be given only *ex hypotheſi*, upon the ſuppoſition men uſe the preventing well. Conſider therefore a little, that you call preventing Grace; whether is this the ſame with ſome of thoſe things before-mentioned, or ſome thing

diſtinct? Whether is this preventing grace any more then Gods general providential act of making men Naturally perfect, giveing men the power or faculty of chuſing Good and Evil, and ſo leaving them to their meer ſelf-determination? If not, it is no more than giving the faculties, which is rather to be called giving *Nature, than Grace. If you ſay (as ſome do, and then unſay it again) this preventing Grace doth more, for it doth excite and move.

* *Poſſe habere fidem & Charitatem naturæ eſt hominum: habere autem, gratiæ fidelium.* Aug. de præd. Sanct. cap. 5. præd. Sanct.

Let me ask, Doth it excite and move potentially only, or actually and really? you will, it may be, ſay, Actually; for to ſay only potentially is a contradiction, and is no more than it doth not, but it would move if it was not hindered (which I ſhall after take notice of) therefore you will ſay, It doth actually move and excite. Now what doth it move and excite but the Will? And what is that but to cauſe actual Willing? If it excite motion, there is no motion of the Will but willing and nilling, conſenting or diſſenting, liking of the thing it is moved to or diſlike; and it doth not move nilling diſſent or diſlike of the good; if it really move and excite, it doth not move nothing: this would be to cauſe a ſtanding motion. So that this if granted, is to grant that God doth not meerly give power by it to the will

will to move it ſelf, but doth over and above this move the Will, which you ſo much dread. If you ſhall ſay (as I know you will at laſt) *movet, ſed nihil promovet*, this doth move the Will, make men willing actually, only on condition they conſent, be willing and obey, and uſe it well.

Firſt; This is a weak manner of ſpeaking: It is to ſay it maketh men willing on condition they be willing, or not unwilling; that is, on condition they have no need of it, and that the work be done before it come.

Secondly; This is to run them both into one, and make the preventing Grace the ſame with the ſubſequent. Thirdly; Yea, this is to deny all but the common Grace of giving the faculties (if it be proper to call it Grace) and the Goſpel.

Now to ſpeak of the ſubſequent Grace. If a man uſe this preventing Grace well, will the ſubſequent certainly follow? You ſay, yea. Which of thoſe things above-named doth this belong to? will this ſubſequent Grace only give them power of willing Good, or make them actually to will it? If it only give them power to chuſe the good, this is the Natural faculty. Doth it alſo make them actually willing? you will ſay, That cannot be the proper uſe of this, for they are actually willing before; elſe they could not have uſed the preventing Grace well. Therefore you will ſay, this is to make them continue and perſevere, and

grow in actual willingneſs. But, will this keep them actually willing? you will ſay, No; not unleſs they continue uſing this Grace right, and that they do not, except they continue actually wiling to uſe it aright: That is, it will make them perſevere in chuſing Good, and refuſing the Evil, on condition they do perſevere chuſing the Good and refuſing the Evil; that is, on condition they have no need of it. And your ſubſequent Grace is alſo no more than giving the faculty and power, and the ſame with your preventing Grace. And ſo the total amounts to no more than this, If they improve that free-Will, without which they cannot be men, they ſhall be men ſtill while they live. You may apply what is here ſpoken to any effect that can be aſſigned to this Grace (while they will maintain only general Grace) as taking away reſiſtance, and unwillingneſs to Good; or cauſing a man to pray and ſeek after God. I am aſhamed thus to repreſent to you that which is the Grace, that ſome other-wiſe Learned and Reverend men will only grant beſide giving the Goſpel.

Nos autem dicimus humanam voluntatem ſic divinitus adjuvâri ad faciendum juſtitiam, ut præter quod creatus eſt homo cum libero arbitrio; præterque doctrinam quâ ei præcipitur quemadmodum vivere debet, accipiat Spiritum Sanctum &c. Aug. de Spir. & litt. cap. 3.

And by the way, let me wiſh ſuch as make this Objection, to take heed for all the ſpecious fair ſhew it hath, *viz.* This, That it would deſtroy our hu-

humanity for God to move mans Will, any other way than by giving him power to Will. For a man that ſhould keep to this as his opinion, may be eaſily forced by dint of Argument, againſt his Will to affirme, that the holy Spirit doth nothing in the firſt Converſion, or carrying on the work of Grace after; beſide barely propound the object, which is done by the meer preaching of the Goſpel; and alſo give the faculties or Natural power.

Now if you ſhould hold this tenent, that God doth no more for any than thus, I do freely grant that ſome of thoſe inconveniences that many have endeavoured to aſcribe to this opinion, would not follow from it (he that endeavours to confute one errour with another, which is too common, doth ordinarily confirm his Antagoniſt in his error): as for Example, it would not follow, that a man would be the proper cauſe of his own Juſtification and Salvation, and that he was not beholden to God for them; and to ſpeak ingenuouſly, you do well enough anſwer this Accuſation. We cannot ſay properly, a Felon that readeth, pardoned himſelf, or ſaved himſelf; but the Legiſlators upon his reading, pardoned him; yea *adæquatly*, though the Legiſlators did no ways cauſe him to read. But theſe things will follow unavoidably.

* First; It would be impossible for a man that should hold this practically to pray for such things as these following seriously. First, For Grace and Holiness, and that God would encline his heart to his Testimonies; because he holds that God cannot with Justice and Honour, without a culpable respecting of persons, and without destroying mans Nature, do any more than give him the power, and leave it meerly to himself to make use of it. He can only pray God would give him power to make use of it if he will, and give him the Gospel; but not that God would act any further to make him willing, and to make him to obey. It is to say, Give me but power to obey, and let me alone for willing and obeying; Give but Talents, and let me alone for using them. I do not beg any more, for it would be to destroy my humanity, and dishonour thee to give any more.

* *Per quorum disputationem Suadetur ut nec orare debeamus; non quia hoc audent apertè dicere, sed eorum sententiam, velint nolint, sequitur.* Aug. Epist. 143. ad Anast.

Cur petitur, quod ad nostram pertinet potestatem, si Deus non adjuvat voluntatem? Aug. de grat. Chr. Lib 1. c. 15.

Quis optat, quod in potestate sic habet, ut ad faciendum nullo indigeat adjumento? Aug. de peccat. merit. & remiss. Lib. 2. c. 6.

Second-

Secondly; Neither can he pray for continuance of Grace, or to be kept from Apoſtacy; he cannot pray as *David*, *Keep this in the thoughts of our hearts for ever, and confirm our hearts unto thee*; ſo as to mean any more, than that God would cauſe him to perſevere, only if he do perſevere; that is, if he ſhall remain conſtantly willing; but cannot pray that God would preſerve him from willing to forſake him, and to cleave to the world; that God would ſo irradiate his minde with the danger of loſing all that is dear to him, and ſo confirm his reſolution, and habituate his choice, that he may not be able morally to obtain of himſelf to forſake God, becauſe he holds that this God will by no means do. And he that cannot pray thus, what ever Prayers he may ſay beſide, muſt neceſſarily live very carelelly, or very uncomfortably, wanting a humble fiducial confidence in God, to keep him from degenerating, or, which is worſe, he muſt be very Proud, and have ſuch confident thoughts of his own heart and will's goodneſs & conſtancy, that he dare lay a great wager on

Quando ergo regavit Chriſtus ne fides Petri deficeret, Quid aliud rogavit niſi ut haberet in fide liberrimam, invictiſſimam & perſeverantiſſimam voluntatem. Aug. lib. de corrept. & grat. cap. 8.

Eſt quippe in nobis per hanc Dei gratiam in bono recipiendo & perſeveranter tenendo, non ſolum poſſe quod volumus, verum etiam velle quod poſſumus. Subventum eſt igitur infirmitati voluntatis humanæ, ut divinâ gratiâ indeclinabiliter, & inſuperabiliter ageretur, & ideo quamvis infirma, non tamen deficeret, neque adverſitate aliquâ vinceretur. ibid. cap. 11.

his own head and heart, that if he have but a Natural power of Willing, be but continued a man, he ſhall do well enough for Willing. As for example, you have ſeen my judgment; Now this being my judgment, I muſt acknowledg that I cannot pray that God would take away my *Natural power of willing Evil, of ſinning, and finally falling away, and conſequently of being undone for ever; for this would be to deſtroy my faculties, and make me no Man, as you ſee by what I have ſaid. But I can pray that he would ſo work in me by his Spirit (in ſuch a way agreeable to my humanity, as he underſtands and I do not) that I may have that Moral rectitude of Will, which is oppoſite to that Moral Impotency I have ſpoken of, that I may not be able to obtain of my ſelf to leave off to be Wiſe and to be Good, and to turn from the way of Righteouſneſs; but may ſay with *Joſeph*, how can I do this Evil? and I am ſure (what ever any ſhould object, of this deſtroying my will, and making me a Beaſt, and not a Rational Creature, and that it would be rather Gods willing it in me, than my willing it) this would perfect my will; unleſs we can ſay, Saints in Hea-

* Whoſoever is born of God, cannot ſin; not that he hath not a Natural power to ſin, but he hath not a Will, a mind to ſin. Mr. *Caril* on *Job*. Laſt Volum. *pa.* 524.

Heaven will be no men, and * Christ on Earth was no man, and that it is not the Saints in Heaven love God, but God in them loves God. Speaking of

* *Aug de Prad. Sanct. lib. 1. c. 17.*

Christs free Will, *An ideo in illo non libera voluntas erat, ac non tanto magis erat, quanto magis peccato servire non poterat?*

Thirdly; He cannot pray that God would make the Gospel prevail effectually in the world; or in his Congregation, if a Minister; he cannot pray after his Preaching, when he hath Sown, and Planted, and Watered, that God would give the increase, nor can he Pray for such things for his Relations, but must mean no more than this; that God would give them that free Will which they have already, and all men besides, even the Natural powers, and that they may be able to obey the Gospel if they will.

[* *Destruunt orationes quas facit ecclesia, sive pro infidelibus & Doctrinæ Dei resistentibus, ut convertantur ad Deum: Sive pro fidelibus, ut augeatur eis fides, & perseverent in ea.* Aug. Hæres. 88.

Si fides est tantummodo libert a bitrij, nec datur a Deo, propter quid pro iis qui nolunt credere oramus ut credant? Quid prorsus faceremus inaniter, nisi rectissime crederemus etiam perversas, & fidei contrarias voluntates Omnipotentem Deum ad credendum posse convertere. Aug. lib. de grat. & lib. Arb.]

And by the way, neither can they pray very earnestly for this power or ability to obey the Gospel (which it is granted they may pray as earnestly for, as a man may pray

pray that God would not deprive him of the right Natural uſe of his faculties of underſtanding and will) to be given, or continued to themſelves or others, ſince they (*viz.* that maintain this power is all that the Grace of the Holy Ghoſt gives) hold, they cannot ſin, or be guilty, or inexcuſable in not obeying the Goſpel without this power, and ſo could not be condemned for not obeying the Goſpel if *God* denyed it them; eſpecially alſo conſidering they muſt hold conſequently to this principle, that God is bound in Natural juſtice, either to give this power, whether they Pray or Pray not for it, or not to condemn them for not obeying the Goſpel, becauſe God will not do unjuſtly, whether men Pray or Pray not. Yea further, ſince it may well be queſtioned, whether it be lawful to pray God to do that which he is bound by Natural equity and juſtice to do, (though I confeſs it is otherwiſe when only bound by promiſe) or not to do that which he is bound by Natural juſtice not to do; It is therefore queſtionable, whether it can be maintained lawful, according to the principles of thoſe that hold that the only effect of Grace in diſpute, is giving that power, without which men could not ſin, or (which is all one) be inexcuſable in not obeying the Goſpel, to Pray God to give themſelves or others that which they hold is the only effect of this Grace, (*viz.* this power of obeying the Goſ-

Gospel)for this end; *viz.* for this, That they may not be condemned for disobeying it; since he could not, as they say, in justice so condemn them if he gave them not this power. And further, Such as hold that the only effect of this, commonly called the Grace of the Holy Spirit; or commonly called subjective and internal Grace (different from the objective and external Grace, consisting in giving and promulgating the Gospel, and external providences, prosperous or afflictive; objectively fitted and suited to cause obedience to the Gospel, (concerning which objective take notice I do not speak, nor move any controversy) is only the giving that power to obey the *Gospel*, without which they could not be to blame, or inexcusable, or condemned for not obeying it; I say such as these can give but very cold and heartless thanks for *Grace*, causing them to obey the *Gospel*, comparatively to the thanks they of other apprehensions can give. But this on the By, for I am now only professedly speaking of these things in the sense wherein they cannot, as not pray at all, so neither praise *God* at all for them; which now I return to again.

Secondly; He cannot praise *God* for such things named before, as being done by *God*, if he hold they are not; he cannot say Cordially what the Pharisee is re-

repreſented ſpeaking with his lips; *God, I thank thee, I am not as other men are, Extortioners, Unjuſt, Adulterers, or even as this Publican.* I would not wrong any, I mean he cannot ſay this *heartily, except he mean no more than this; *I thank thee thou didſt as much for me as for theſe men*, but that I differ from them in theſe reſpects, I had the power indeed from thee as they had; but, that I uſed it better then they, I owe to my ſelf free Will. Whereas uſing this common Grace is ſurely the chief prime matter. Oh but he received this power from *God* to uſe it? It is true: but yet a man that knoweth he hath done ſome good thing, or avoided Evil more than others; if he be of this opinion, he accounts it was not therefore done by him, as, becauſe he received more from *God* than others, in the ſame circumſtances with him; but holds that he owes nothing here for any ſpecial *Grace* or help from *God*; for though that which *God* did for him was the cauſe, according to his Hypotheſis, of his goodneſs, and differing, taken abſolutely, yet not at all taken comparatively in the ſenſe now in hand; It was no cauſe of the difference taken as a difference: Take this inſtance, *Two men had equal great flocks given them, one increaſeth his eſtate, the other prodigallizeth all away*, if the reaſon be asked

* *Prorſus non gratias Deo agimus, ſed nos agere fingimus, ſi unde illi gratias agimus, ipſum facere non putamus.* Aug. Epiſt. 107. ad Vitalem.

asked absolutely How one of them cometh to such a great Estate, far greater than the other, *the Stock given was a cause, and so thanks are due to him that gave it*; but if the reason be asked comparatively, why he differeth from the other, he owes that to himself, and his good Husbandry, and not to him that gave him the Stock, no thanks is due here at all in this sense: for this was no cause of, and so no thanks due for his differing taken comparatively, and not absolutely, in which sense I am now speaking. And then if *God* did afterward do great things for a man, give him subsequent Grace (be it what it will) it was not from any peculiar favour or good pleasure without respect to any thing in him, but because he used the preventing general Grace (be it what it will) rightly, which others had in as great a measure as he, and did not. So if a man have fearfully declined from his wonted integrity, and is after recovered; he cannot thank God for this, as coming from any special Grace (if he hold that God doth not, because he cannot, without unjust προσωπολη‡ία give *imparia paribus*) but holds, God did no more to recover him, than to others, going yet on in such degeneracy; whereas others can say, if they were more noble, like the

the *Beræans*, *Acts* 17. 11. better tempered and more ingenuous then those of *Thessalonica*, so as to receive the Gospel when others refused it, that this readiness of mind to comply with the Gospel, was from some special Grace of *God* vouchsafed to them, that was not to others, like that Grace that opened *Lydia's* heart. And these can also say, that though they have the Natural power of willing and doing good, or *God* would not require it of them; yet such is the wicked wilfulness of their hearts, they could not morally obtain of themselves to will and do any good, or avoid any evil, but for this Grace and help of the Spirit; which yet helpeth them (they are sure, though they know not how, it may be, to answer all difficulties) in a way suitable to keep up their greatest care and diligence, and ordinarily only gradually, and in the serious and diligent use of means. And whatever *God* may do, or hath done more arbitrarily in being found so far of some that seek him not as to make them seek him; (else the worser sort of men would always continue the worst, or if recovered, might ascribe it so to themselves,

Solet dici, Ideo credere merxit, quia vir bonus erat antequam crederet: Quod de Cornelio dici potest, cujus acceptæ sunt Eleemosynæ & auditæ orationes antequam credidisset in Christum; nec tamen sine aliquâ fide dabat & orabat: nam quomodo invocabat in quem non crediderat? &c. Quicquid igitur, & antequam in Christum crederet, & cum crederet, & cum credidisset, bene operatus est Cornelius, totum Deo dandum est, ne forte quis extollatur, Aug. lib. de præd. Sanct. cap. 7. de præd. Sanct.

ſelves, as not to any ſpecial Grace, which might juſtly have been denyed them, and was denyed others of like equal demerits) yet they do not, yea, account it would be their hainous ſin, and a deſerved forfeiture of this Grace, to expect it any other way. Let intelligent men reflect back and conſider, whether all theſe ill Conſequences will not equally follow from the opinion of *Æquilibrium*, which it is pretended Grace giveth, diſtinct from *liberum Arbitrium*; while it is ſaid to be given to all alike, and that God will do no more; yea, whether it be poſſible any way to avoid theſe inconveniences while men deny the whole deſign and ſubſtance, (though ſome may expreſs ſuch things leſs conveniently) of thoſe paſſages in the reformed Churches Confeſſions, concerning Election and ſpecial Grace. I had rather that you gathered it of your ſelves, than that I ſhould ſhew it more plain. I could ſhew you many other fearful Conſequences from this opinion: But I deſigning brevity, forbear it as needleſs, conſidering all formes of Prayer Ancient and Modern, and the whole current of Scripture concerning mans diſability, and need of the Spirit's help, laugh this opinion to ſcorn; and conſidering this opinion was abhorred and ſpewed out as poyſon by the ancient Church, as ſoon as ſet abroach by *Pelagius*, and offered to, and taſted by her; and it is alſo profeſſed to be abhorred, and is, I hope,

hope, however practically, by those that yet oppose the motion of the Will by this Grace any other way, than by giving to all men a power of self-determination upon this evasion and pretence, that such a power of self-determination is given by Grace, distinct from, and over and above, that which is essentially necessary to a sound man, and therefore, say they, in this we differ from *Pelagius*, and upon this account they deny it, because to do any more than to give such a power would be (say they) to destroy our humanity. Both which are meer assertions without any cogent shew of proofe that ever I could see, and the contrary is easily proved.

Let us remember we are but men, and *Gods* actings are above our reach, yea, our own Souls-acts are so too. But *God* well understands his own actings and ours also; and what well consists with our freedom and faculties, and what not, which may content us. Surely that man never studied such things, that shall pretend he can satisfactorily decide all those School-difficulties about our Understanding and Will, wherein there seems to be demonstrative proof on both sides. *God* hath given us knowledg enough of our Souls for use, but not to satisfie our curiosity. I confess I cannot comprehend the holy Spirit's way of making men willing of unwilling in the first, or after, or continued Conversion. And I think it folly for me

me to attempt it that understand my own Soul's actions so little. Yet, I think I can prove (so, as it cannot be answered by man) that this working on the Will is only *mediante intellectu* (or, which is all one, and yet avoides the disputes of faculties differing, *mediante ratione*) *i. e.* only by setting fast upon men the apprehensions of the good of the one way, and evil of the other; by so irradiating the Understanding with reasons, as to cause this choyce: and the * Scripture seems to run much this way. But I dare not yet say, I am sure it is only this way, though I strongly incline to it, and think I could answer what can be opposed. But then how he setteth home truth thus in Evidence, how he thus irradiateth the understanding; by what act distinct from the naked propounding the Truth and Gospel; what this demonstration of the Spirit is, I do not understand, and dare not so much as pray to God to tell me; I know it is too high for me, yea, or any man in this lower world. But yet, sure I am, First, somthing he doth, yea, a noble operative, somthing in those gracious effects on the Soul, beside giving us our Natural faculties, and the Gospel to make us willing. And Secondly, that it is somthing well consistent with mans humanity, and the freedom of mans will.

* Jo. 6. 44, 45. 1 Thes. 4. 9. Ephe. 1. 17, 18, 19. 2 Cor. 4. 4. 1 Cor. 2. 4, 6.

See this more fully spoken to in my Book, called the *Great Propitiation.*

And Thirdly, That it shall not * actually be prevailingly resisted to the end, by such and such particular persons, known only to God; and so they shall not be able Morally to obtain of themselves finally to resist it; that is, they will not, though they can in the ordinary sense. And Fourthly, What he doth in time, he intended to do from Eternity. And Fifthly, That it is somthing God needed not, was not bound in justice to have done, to make men inexcusable in not obeying the Gospel; whereas it is necessary, in justice, to make men inexcusable in not obeying, That they be endowed with the Natural faculties and power of understanding and willing; *i. e.* that they be not Fools and Children that have not power and knowledg to chuse the Good and refuse the Evil. And also that they have a suitable objective evidence propounded, which they could understand if they would; that is, that they could obey it if they would, though this distinct help of the Spirit that actually causeth to will, be not given them; else they would be excusable and without blame if it had not been given them. And Sixthly, That this

* God in converting men, taketh not from them the Natural created power of Nilling, *purum tè posse nolle, Christo contrahente*; but he taketh away the Moral, Wicked, and Godless power, and Vitious and Corrupt dispositions of resisting. *Rutherford*, Christ dying, *p.* 314.

this ſomthing, and all that is here ſpoken is well conſiſtent (whether we can underſtand it or is ſo *, or not) with the greateſt hopeful encouragement of certainty of Salvation to all mens ſincere deſires and diligent endeavours, and with the greateſt diſcouraging danger to all negligence; And that it would be as really deſtructive to true Religion, and conſequently damnable to hold an opinion of ſuch endeavours, not being neceſſary to, and not certainly attaining Salvation, or the neglect of them not undoing; (I mean to hold it finally and practically) as the groſſeſt *Pelagianiſme* held thus particularly would be. And Objections here are very inconſiderable. It may be made plain to men of competent rational parts for ſuch things, that Gods knowing from Eternity what men will do in the variety of Circumſtances, is no more inconſiſtent with mans freedom, and no more difficult to be anſwered and reconciled, than Gods knowing the week or day before, what a free agent will do, would be inconſiſtent with His freedom and liberty: And it is no more difficult to anſwer any ob-

* Say with St. *Auſtin*, *Quaras tu rationem, ego expaveſcam altitudinem; tu ratiocinare, ego credam.*

Nunquid ideo negandum eſt quod apertum eſt, quia comprehendi non poteſt quod occultum eſt? Aug. lib. de perſev. bon. cap. 14.

Illi dicunt, Ut quid rogamus Deum ne vincamur tentatione, quod in noſtra poteſtate eſt? Iſti dicunt, Ut quid conamur bene vivere, quod in Dei eſt poteſtate? O Domine, O Pater, qui es in cœlis, ne nos inferas in quamlibet iſtarum tentationum, ſed libera nos a malo. Aug. Hom. 53. in Johan.

objection made from Gods fore-knowledg, than it is to anſwer the ſame argument againſt mans freedom, drawn from that undoubted *maxim*, *Quicquid eſt, quando eſt, neceſſe eſt eſſe*, the ſame anſwer equally ſerving both. As for example: If one ſhould object thus againſt mans liberty to act and not act, to will and not will; He hath power both to will and not will ſuch good, either before he actually wills it, or when he actually wills it; not before he actually wills it, for then he doth not will it, and when he doth not will it, it is impoſſible he ſhould will it: not when he actually wills it; for then he doth actually will it; and when he doth will it, it is impoſſible but he ſhould actually will it, and therefore no man can have freedom of will, to will and not will at any time.

This fallacious Argument may be ſo urged, that it is impoſſible to give any anſwer but this, That this impoſſibility *ex hippotheſi* is not at all inconſiſtent with mans liberty, becauſe it is an impoſſibility poſteriour to or after the acting or not acting, in order of Nature. So the ſame may be here truly anſwered, that, The infallible fore-knowledg of future free Agents actions, is no way inconſiſtent with the freedom and liberty of ſuch actions; this fore-knowledg being after the ſaid actions in or-

order of Nature, and *exiſtendi conſequentiâ*. He fore-knew it * becauſe the free Agent would do it, and not on the contrary the free Agent would do it, becauſe he fore-knew it.

* οὐ γὰρ, ἐπεὶ ἔγνωσαι, γίνεται ἀλλ', ἐπεὶ ἔμελλε γίνεσθαι, ἔγνωσαι. Origen Philocal cap. 23. *Quocirca nullo negotio cogimur; aut, retentâ præſcientiâ Dei, tollere voluntatis arbitrium, aut, retento voluntatis arbitrio, Deum, quod nefas eſt, negare præſcium futurorum, ſed utrumque amplectimur*, &c. Aug. de Civit. Dei. lib. 5. cap. 10.

And if any ſhould take occaſion hence, to harden their hearts in the neglect of Gods means of Salvation, and ſo periſh, how eaſily will God hereafter confute a man making ſuch an objection; Is it not fit that a heart-ſearcher, and one that knows what men will do, one that knoweth our thoughts long before, ſhould rule the world?

And the only, poſſible, ſeemingly-unanſwerable difficulty that I can call to mind, that is urged with colour of reaſon, and that it concerns us to anſwer to juſtifie God, is this, of ſuch particular mens obedience, being not commendable and rewardable. But how can we make ſuch an objection, when we know not certainly what it is that God doth, no more then *Eliſha* did what *Elijah* had done to him, beſide the caſting the Mantle over him, 1 *King.* 19. 19, 20. when he ſaid, *What have I done to thee? to hinder*

thee from going home? And yet something God hath done to some, that they must follow him, and cannot (in a right sense) refuse or leave off as others do, to follow him, though they cannot tell what he hath done.

And suppose a man make such * Hypotheses as these following, to maintain Election and special Grace; how will such Objections vanish, as having no colour or appearance before them? Suppose that one should maintain, that Gods Spirit doth only use in conversion the same Grace and operation *specie*, the same in kind, and only so much more of it in degree, as he by his omniscience knoweth will prevail actually; I say, so much * higher than that whereby he restraineth wicked men from some particular sins, and whereby he sometimes keepeth their greatest concernments on their mindes against their wills, and almost overcometh them to the obedience of Faith. Why is not this commendable and reward-

* *Quid opus est, ut affirmentur, vel negentur, vel definiantur cum discrimine, quæ sine discrimine nesciuntur.* Aug. Enchir. ad Laux.

* *Vocatio alta & secreta quâ fit ut legi atq; doctrinæ accomodemus, assensum,* Aug. Ep. 107.

Quid nobis est investigare ea quæ neque scire compendium, neque ignorare detrimentum est ullum? Remitte hæc Deo, atq; ipsum scire concedite. Vestri non est liberum rationibus implicare vos talibus, & tam rem tam inutiliter curare res: vestra in aciptii sita est salus animarum vestrarum, & nisi vos applicetis, &c. Arnob. adv. Gentes.

able

able in these that turn, as well as it would have been in the other to have turned? The degree cannot alter the species; so that at most you can but say, It would be less commendable, and yet I could say something to oppose this, but will not, for I am not careful to keep up their over-great honour. Yea, suppose he doth something less in degree than he doth to some continuing wicked, that are made to tremble like *Felix*, and only continueth this striving with them longer, even so long as he certainly knows by his omniscience will prevail with them; yea, suppose he have so restrained some by his gratious operations, that they have not so much as others, made it their interest to oppose the work of Grace; or begins with some betimes, before they are so resolved to go on in their sinful ways, as some hardned sinners; and then useth less of that, we know not what, of the gratious operation of his Spirit, even so much as would not prevaile with more hardned customary sinners, but yet more than he doth to others in equal degree of tenderness with them, and so much as he knows will prevail with these. Why is not the Turning of such commendable and rewardable? why doth this destroy their humanity and freedome? what, because God knew that in the Moral sense explained, they could not obtain of themselves to refuse to yeild to such drawing? Sup-

poſe God had not known it, it would then (you will grant if this be the reaſon) have been commendable, and his knowledg doth not alter the nature of things. Why may we not as well ſay, it would hinder it from being culpable and puniſhable; for a man to ſin, when he cannot find in his heart to do otherwiſe, though he hath the Natural power of doing otherwiſe (which I have ſhewed is apparently falſe) as ſay it would hinder an act from being commendable and rewardable, for God ſo to work by his Spirit, that a man cannot find in his heart, cannot Morally obtain of himſelf, to reject Chriſt and Mercy offered on ſuch eaſie and reaſonable terms, while he hath the Natural power of rejecting them, and ſo of eternally undoing himſelf. Suppoſe againe, another ſhould maintain that God doth ſomthing for the Converſion of all the Elect, different *ſpecie* from what he doth to any others, repreſenting in an extraordinary way for kind, ſomthing to their mind like the Angel with the drawn ſword to *Balaam*, to turn them when ſet forward in an evil way; or ſomthing like the ſhining light about, and the voyce unto, *Paul*. How will you prove that it would not be commendable or rewardable in them to be moved by it? Do you think that *Pauls* turning from perſecuting Chriſtianity to it, was not commendable? *Paul* mentions it as well done

done of him, that he consulted not with flesh and blood, but obeyed. And what wrong would this be to others; whil'st God doth enough for them; yea more then enough, did they not wilfully resist it and oppose it? Suppose God had not done more for any, would they then have been inexcusable in not turning from sin to God? How then can this be possibly conceived to detract from their inexcuseableness?

And for any other difficulties whatsoever, it may be made apparent to any intelligent opposer, that they will no more encomber a man here, than they will in that difficult providence of giving and denying the Gospel. And to make this out, consider these things. First, You use to urge these Scriptures following, so as some think you build too much upon them, being not improbably hyperbolical, *Ezek.* 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. *Get thee to the House of* Israel, *and speak my words unto them, for thou art not sent unto a people of a hard language* (i. e. to the Gentiles): *Surely had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkned, but the House of* Israel *will not hearken.* Mat. 11. 21. *If the mighty works which were done among you, had been done in* Tyre *and* Sidon, *they would have Repented.* So Mat. 12. 14.

Secondly, Consider, this was denyed some places, that it is said, had it been given them, they would have Repented.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, You grant that multitudes are ordinarily saved, where the Scripture-light of the Gospel cometh, that would have perished had it not come: and that God dealt, and dealeth not with every Nation for their Salvation in so high a degree as with the former Jews, and them that enjoy the Gospel.

Fourthly, You constantly grant, and it is expres from Scripture, that God knew they would not Repent to whom he sent such high meanes.

Fifthly, You affirm, God did not, sometimes, send the Gospel to such places where he knew, had he done for them, as those others that Repented not, they would have Repented. This is necessary as a foundation-truth of your Fabrick. And I for my part, freely grant that a man may say, If God had not given me such clear means as he denyed others, I had perished. And I dare not deny but that that height of means internal and external, which he useth with some, and yet it prevaileth not, would have prevailed with others, that more common Grace hath restrained and prepared.

Sixthly, God fore-knoweth it will prevail with all such, with whom it will actually prevail; this you readily grant.

Now there is as much granted in these your constant Confessions as I have said, *viz.* that *God* doth that in order to their Salvation,

on, for some, yea, for multitudes, which he knoweth will prevail with them, that he doth not for others. Only I add this, And that without respect to any good thing in them. Now a man must be either very weak, not to see it, or very wilfull, not to grant it, That all the odious consequences that can be pretended to be fastned on the Doctrine of special Grace delivered by me, may as truly be charged on that which you grant and maintain, except this be true, That this denying of the Gospel is only to those that are worse then any that enjoy it. Which now cometh to be tryed.

That learned worthy man answered Mr. *Perkins* thus, about this thing (and others of his mind generally follow him in it) Thus, *ad prædestinationis & gratiæ singularitatem adstruendam, non magnoperè servit Isthoc, eò quod illi contra quos disputas, etiam suppositâ illius veritate, duplici tibi occurrent ratione*, &c. that is, There may two things be answered here to avoid special Grace, and consequently special Election, which follow thus.

First, saith he, the Reason why any are deprived of the Revelation of the Gospel, is because their Parents, or Ancestors rejected it (he means more than any other that enjoy it, or else it would be, as any one may perceive, weak Impertinency;) Now, to say nothing of the inconsistency of this, with other

other his principles, and how this would not avoid the force, if true, I anſwer, This is apparently not true. I will bring but one inſtance inſtead of many; How many Infants have been ſecretly ſtolen away, or by force and Armes taken away from Chriſtian Parents, and carried away, and Educated in dark Countries, though their Parents were far from rejecting the Goſpel, or however far from rejecting it more than others, whoſe Children enjoyed it? And leſt you ſhould reply yet, Some of their *atavi* or *tritavi*, their higher Anceſtors, were greatly guilty this way, I will ſuppoſe theſe very Parents had more Infant Children not carryed away, and ſo all the ſame Anceſtors.

Secondly; Or ſaith he, they made themſelves unworthy (he meaneth more unworthy of it than any that enjoy the Goſpel, as they confeſs that defend theſe words, and this opinion, elſe it would be Impertinent) of this great favour by miſ-improvingNatural light. But many were deprived of the Goſpel before they could miſ-improve their Natural Light, as in the caſe above-named, and the cauſe muſt be before the effect: And God giveth the Goſpel to many, not improving their Natural Light well. How contrary is this to Scripture, to ſay that the Jews had Gods Statutes and Judgments, becauſe better than all other Nations? The Jews indeed were deprived of ſuch privileges,

leges, becauſe of their ſin and unbelief; but the Apoſtle ſignifies to us, that the Gentiles were not taken in, becauſe better than they; elſe they might boaſt againſt them in the ſenſe he oppoſeth their boaſting. The Apoſtles were forbidden to preach to ſome where they found no oppoſition in the people, and were commanded to preach to other places where they ſhewed themſelves unworthy. And to ſay, that yet they not long after preached in thoſe then prohibited places, avails nothing; for you will grant that many dyed in the mean time: yet while you ſay, that Gods denying the Goſpel to any, or denying the gratious help of his Spirit to any, is for their ſin and ill deſerts, I am far from oppoſing it: I heartily grant it, and it doth not in the leaſt oppoſe what I ſay, or help you, while you mean it only *abſolutè*, abſolutely; But if you ſhould mean it *comparatè*, comparatively, you ſee, or may ſee by what I have ſaid, it is not true. If a Prince take away the priviledges & immunities of one City for their Rebellion, and yet continueth the immunities to another City, equal in the Rebellion; If the Reaſon be asked abſolutely, why he took away the immunities of the City, and would by no means ſpare it, the Reaſon is, their Rebellion, their ill deſerts: But if the Reaſon be asked why he took away their immunities only more than he did from the other City,

City, it must be answered, It was his pleasure, and some special grace or favour to the other City was the cause of this difference, *i. e.* not for any deserts, or less ill deserts of that City spared.

It is here commonly replied, Though it be granted that God doth give to some this way, a special benefit, without any deserts that others have not equally that want the Gospel; yet we deny that God doth it out of any special or greater love to them, than he hath to others that enjoy it not. And so they suppose they maintain yet by this saying (but it would not help if true) that God doth for the Salvation of all alike; but only wherein mans free will (or which is all one as to the argument in hand, mans free Will equally assisted by Grace) occasioneth the difference; And they cite a saying of *Aquinas*, to shew they are not singular in this opinion. But this evasion is very harsh, and very offensive to my cares: for if benefits be not conferred out of love and kindness, they would be only benefits materially, but not formally, and so no thanks would be due for them, no more than for benefits done to a man by another, without, or against the Donor's intention. And so if special benefits in order to a mans Salvation, ought to be apprehended to come, not from special Love and good Will; no special thanks could possibly be accounted due for them:

them: and consequently we are to account our selves no more bound to gratitude for the Gospel, nor no more guilty of ingratitude in not improving it (what ever else we may be guilty of) than they are that want it.

What straits doth this Opinion of denying special Grace and kindness bring men into? If the Gospel should by the Providence of God be sent into one of the *American* Countries, they must unavoidably, according to these principles, think with themselves, We are either better than other *Americans*, and God is bound to do so, or he would be culpably partial, and so would do the same to every Country as good as we: and so they cannot thank him for any special love or favour that he denyed to others as good as they; or they must think with themselves, If we be as bad as others that want the Gospel, we need not thank him for the Gospel as coming from any love or good will that he hath to us, more than to others that enjoy it not. So also the Jews anciently might have said; and so proportionably any Town that hath gotten a more powerful Ministry than formerly, Either we are better than we were, or than other Towns; or, if not, we are no more beholden to him than they are that he takes not this pains with, and so no more thanks due from us than them. They say, Where the great

great Sultan's Horſe treads, no graſs will grow: I may ſay with truth, Where this opinion is held practically, no Grace will grow; and yet ſome maintain this with great confidence, as ſeeing there is no way left to avoid ſpecial Grace, and conſequently Election. And yet this evaſion, if true and not abſurd, doth not at all take off thoſe difficulties that are pretended to follow from Election and ſpecial Grace, but they as much encumber your Conceſſions ſtill; and a wicked heart would ſay, I care not whether it be out of love or no, ſo that God do but that more for me, than others as bad as I, that he knows will ſave me: for if it be not out of love, I ſhall be freed from the obligation of thankfulneſs.

Let ſuch Scriptures as theſe be well conſidered to prove ſpecial benefits, and to prove them to be from ſpecial love, *Deut.* 7, 8. The Lord thy God hath choſen thee to be a ſpecial people unto himſelf, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not ſet his love on you, nor chooſe you, becauſe you were more in number, but becauſe he loved you, *cap.* 9. 4. *Speak not thou in thy heart after the Lord caſteth out the people of the Land,* ſaying, *for my Righteouſneſs the Lord hath brought me to this Land.* For the wickedneſs (obſerve it) of theſe Nations did the Lord drive them out; but not for thy Righteouſneſs,

or uprightneſs of thy heart, doeſt thou go into their Land. *Underſtand therefore* (how he urgeth it as a matter of great concernment in Religion, to make them thankful!) *that the Lord giveth thee not this good Land for thy Righteouſneſs.*

The Learned *Grotius* hath this obſervation on this place, as ſeeing it apparent hence. *Prima Dei beneficia ſine meritis contingunt; illis, in traductio interram; nobis, ipſa fides.* Which I cannot Engliſh better than thus, "God giveth the firſt benefits without conditions, and ſo giveth Faith or the Goſpel-condition without conditions, though other conſequent benefits upon conditions. Now I doubt not, but when God thus urged this upon the people [*Speak not in thy heart*, and *Underſtand therefore*] as of great concernment in Religion, he would have been very angry if one ſhould have ſtood up and ſaid, as many now; God's love & kindneſs is to every one alike, but only where Virtue or Vice makes the difference; and ſo God either doth not love you better than other people, or, if theſe benefits have love in them, then it is true, God doth not love us ſo as to give us theſe priviledges and ordinances which he denyeth to other people, becauſe we were more than others, for we are fewer; yet (however for any thing we know) becauſe we are better; and not meerly from his good pleaſure, without reſpect

to any good or less-hurt in us: and it is true, It is not for our Righteousness in a strict sense; but it was for some occult quality in us akin to Righteousness: For this would have been to have said to God, I either know better than Thou or *Moses*, or, if you know as well as I, you conceal your meaning to engage us more to thankfulness: For though you seem to speak largely, yet you have not made a sufficient enumeration; for it was not meerly from some special love and favour not granted to others as good as we; but somthing God had respect-to in us, better than in others.

Again, when God said, *Mal.* 1. 2, 3. *I have loved you saith the Lord*, yet you say, *Wherein hast thou loved us? was not* Esau Jacobs *Brother*, saith the Lord? *yet I loved* Jacob, *and hated* Esau: that is, *I preferred* Jacob *before* Esau. God spake this to upbraid the Jews with unthankfulness, and to move them to gratitude, to love and honour Him as a Father. But one might have replyed here according to some, This giving to him and us his posterity greater mercies than to *Esau*, was not to love him and us his posterity more than *Esau* and his posterity, though you call it so; and so we can say for all this, *Wherein hast thou loved us, more than* Esau *and his posterity?* or else, this was not from any special love to him and us, without respect to any special thing in

in him or us, that would not have been to *Esau* and his posterity, if as good as he or we; and therefore it doth not oblige us to any special obedience and thankfulness, more than them.

They might have defended themselves, That their ingratitude was no more culpable than that of the *Edomites*, had they been of some mens opinion, thus; There is only a two-fold love or good-will, antecedent Love, and consequent Love, or good-will (which is a distinction, * Ancient and of good use, and ought to be taken notice of, to keep our notions clear; though I dislike their saying, that the Antecedent love is equal to all,) The Antecedent love is that which hath no respect to any good in men, but doth good to all men, without respect to any good in them; now this, say they, is equal to all men alike. I grant it, to all men; but am proving, it is not equal to all men.

* Chrysost. in Epist. ad Ephes. cap. 1. hom. 1. Θέλημα πρῶτον, τὸ μὴ ἀπολέσθαι ἡμᾶς πληχθέντας. Θέλημα δεύτερον, τὸ γενομένους κακῶς ἀπολέσθαι.

And *Damascenus* after him, explain's more fully this Distinction.

Secondly, the Consequent Love, called also * *Amor justitiæ*, being according to a Rule and Law; which consequent Love, or Love of Justification, is Conditional, and hath essentially a respect to some good thing in men, being by, and according to a Law, the Gospel-Rule. Now this, say they, is equal to all men alike, but where their good-

* If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive.

ness or wickedness occasion the difference. And I readily grant this as apparent, That this Consequent Love is to all men alike, as to the main and substance of it, and the effects of it, as they perform the condition or not; which is no more but this, *He that is holy, and so continues, shall not perish, but have everlasting* Life, be he who he will, without any respect of persons; and, *He that is more holy, shall be more happy; even as he that is wicked, and so continues, shall be miserable, and he that is more wicked, more miserable, without any exception of Persons whatsoever*, as it is said, Act. 10. 34. *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every Nation, he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of him.*

Now, how easily might they have defended themselves, if the Antecedent-love was alike to all, you have seen already: And if this was to be understood, as Opposers generally would have it, of the Consequent conditional love that hath respect to mans goodness or wickedness, they might have replyed, What though *Esau* was *Jacobs* Brother, and so equal in that respect? yet this is said to no purpose; for they were of no equal good qualities, one was a good man, the other a bad; You would have been guilty of at least not fair dealing, if you had not done for him more than *Esau*;

What

What an inconſequent manner of ſpeaking would this have been, to move them to ſpecial thankfulneſs, to greater thankfulneſs than was due from *Edomites*, if he mean by Love, the rectoral and conditional Love, that hath reſpect to ſomthing in men?

If a Prince ſhould ſay, when one Brother of many was Executed for Treaſon going on in his Rebellion, and the other Brethren ceaſed their Rebellion, and became Loyal, when there was an inviolable Act of Oblivion made to all, on condition they would ceaſe their Rebellion, If he ſhould ſay, *Was not he your Brother? And yet I have not hanged you all, what cauſe have you to be thankful in an eſpecial manner, that I dealt not with you, as with your Brother?* They might reply, *This of his being our Brother is nothing to us; we are indeed much ingaged to You for your general Love and favour, in making ſuch an Act of Oblivion upon ſuch an eaſie condition; but, that you did not Execute us as well as our Brother, is no ſpecial favour; for though he was our Brother, we performed the condition, and he did not; and, had we done as he, you would have Executed us alſo. You urge a fallacious argument to impoſe upon us ſpecial thankfulneſs, which is not due; It would indeed be right arguing if you meant by his being our Brother, our being and doing like him in every thing; but then it is not true; but if you mean by it,*

only his being our Brother, it will not enforce on us any special thankfulness.

So if two Brethren have equal Stocks given them to trade with, and one hath improved well by his industry, and the other is undone by negligence, what a loose speech would this be of the Donor, Is not he your Brother? what cause have you to be observant of me more than your Brother? and how far more great, would your ingratitude be than your Brother's?

What do these words here, Was not *Esau Jacobs* Brother? but stand in the place of a sufficient enumeration, to signifie that they were equal every way, but only where his love and especial Grace made the difference? And how * Impertinently else doth the Apostle *Paul* alledg them, *Rom.* 9. 13?

* I think it an easie matter to vindicate that Chapter, *Rom.* 9. that it doth speak of the Antecedent Love, *viz.* Vocation, and not of the Consequent or Justification, from *verse* 9. to 30. though yet I think some on the other hand, build that height upon it, that they have no foundation there, for; But I chuse to reason from places and things more obvious, as requiring fewer words.

Now if it be once granted, that God doth any special act of Grace for any without respect to any good in them, which he doth not for others; I see, you constantly and readily will grant, that he willed and decreed to do it from Eternity: For the

Vor-

Verſtian Hypotheſes do not take with rational men. So that I think, inſtead of proving this * Conſequence; which is agreed on both ſides, I have more need, if this was a place for it, to tell people that, ſo they do but grant this Conſequence, it would be their ſin ordinarily to think of it in their ordinary duties, except in ſome few caſes, and it is their duty ordinarily to think of ſuch things as preſent, or as if they were to begin now, but this would require too many words to explain.

* While a man holds ſpecial Grace, and the neceſſity of it, he holds all virtually that I am moſt ſollicitious to maintain againſt oppoſers; And I could favourably paſs by any errors in a man's notions about Election, that lightly he can hold, while he holds this. And I like well the moderation of thoſe Antient Councils held againſt *Pelagianiſm*, and wiſh others would imitate ſo reverend a pattern, Who all of them determined for Grace, and its neceſſity, but none of them determined any thing about Election, though then much controverted, as not holding that fundamental, but left that to be defended & taught by the Orthodox Doctors of the Church, by ſtrength of argument, drawn from Scripture and reaſon, according to their beſt apprehenſions.

And further, to put the thing I have ſpoken of, quite out of doubt. Let any intelligent man conſider, and he will perceive, that he that ſhould hold this opinion practically, that the giving and continuing of the Goſpel, is conditional in that proper ſenſe that Juſtification and Salvation are; will unavoidably run into ſuch miſchiefs, as I have before

before at large mentioned. He could not pray ſeriouſly, that God would ſend the Goſpel to places where their Parents rejected it, or where they improve not well their Naturals; but can only pray in ſuch words, *viz.* that, God would ſend the Goſſpel to the dark places of the world if they have not, or do not abuſe their Naturals; that is, if they be good; but not ſend it to make them good, while bad: And alſo cannot pray that God would continue the Goſpel where it is, but only that God would continue it to him and his, and the Nation or Nations, if they ſhall carry ſuitably to it. For a man cannot cordially pray, yea, it would be his ſin to pray for that he holds God will by no means do, becauſe he cannot in juſtice, becauſe it would be an unworthy reſpecting of Perſons, or becauſe God hath made ſuch a rule as he doctrinally holds he will not break; no more than he can pray that God would ſend the Goſpel to men departed this life in their Impenitency and Unbelief. And alſo he cannot Praiſe God heartily for the Goſpel, as coming from any love to us that was denyed to others as good as he or we.

I am ſenſible, it may poſſibly be in your thoughts to object that this difficulty may truly lye upon me, thus, Do not I pray that God would forgive great incorrigible ſinners, and yet I have affirmed pardon to be properly & ſtrictly Conditional. There-

Therefore I will answer this, though it require many words, and also because in so doing, I hope I shall make plain some things that confound some men; And I dare say, that they that do not keep such Notions as these following, distinct, shall contradict themselves almost in every word they shall speak about such things.

God's Love, and Grace, and Mercy is used in several senses in Scripture. First, Sometimes by it is meant, that Love in giving Christ a Ransom for the world, that whosoever of sinful men turned, should live. This Love, take it precisely so far and no further, it is to all alike common (though I have shewed, in another place, it is in some other sense special) this Love is great Love indeed, and the greatest in a sense; for it is greater than any of the rest taken singly and abstractly, 1 *Joh.* 4 9 10. *Herein is Love*, &c. This Love is absolute and not conditional; he absolutely gave him, *that if men believed, they should not perish*, and whether any believe or no, it no way lessens this, being alien to it; though yet the great actual benefit of it, is conditional. Again, notwithstanding this Love to all, in thus bringing them from under a necessity of perishing by their sins, yet they may be under his rectoral wrath and displeasure, under condemnation; yea, and all are so, till they Repent and Believe. Secondly,

Secondly, Somtimes by it, is meant the Love or Mercy of giving his Ordinances, as to the Jews in the Scriptures before mentioned; and the giving the Revelation of Christ in the Gospel. Now, this Love is not common to all alike. And this love is not conditional strictly and properly, God being not tyed in justice and honour, neither having tyed himself to any certain rule or condition; though yet the deprivation of it, is granted, to be for mens sins absolutely (as I have explained it) and none can expect the continuance of it, that carry not suitably to it. This Love also is consistent with Rectoral hatred, and being under condemnation. We may also pray that God would give this to people unworthy and wicked, even while they are so, that it may turn their hearts; and may pray for the continuance of it to people neglecting and slighting it; because, as I said, it is left arbitrary to God.

Thirdly, That, called the Love, or * Mercy of Election, whereby God maketh people to differ, the fruit of it being working the Gospel-condition, turning men from sin unto God. Now, a man is under the Rectoral hatred of God, that is, is unjustified and under condemnation, notwithstanding this Love, while you mean by it only Gods intention to convert him, yea, and till this effect be wrought, I mean, till after

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* *Illud nescio quo modo dicatur, Frustra Deum misereri nisi nos velimus: Si enim deus misereretur, etiam volumus.* Aug. ad Simpli. Lib. 1. qu. 2.

in order of Nature, though not of time: for a man is first Converted in order of Nature, before he be justified, or have right to Heaven, which is the Rectoral Love.

Again, This Love of Election is not conditional, neither in the intention, nor effect, or Execution, in a proper sense; though none can expect this effect, but in the use of the means, and God doth work this effect by means, and men deservingly provoke God to deny it by their sin and neglect of means. Yet God having tyed himself to no uninterruptible rule, nor being tyed in justice, we may pray for it, for those that neglect means, and seek him not, and have highly deserved his denyal of it. We may pray, that God would turn and change their hearts, before they be turned and changed, yea or have any desire of this Grace.

See this more fully spoken to in my book, called *the Great Propitiation*.

Fourthly; But now that which is most properly called Rectoral Love, or consequent Love, or justifying Love, pardoning saving Love, is properly conditionally in the strictest sense, is tyed to a rule or Law, and is a resultancy from a Law, upon something done by men; to wit, upon their performing the condition of the said Gospel-Law, or promise, *Jo.* 16. 27. *The Father Himself Loveth you, because you have Loved me, and believed*

and believed that, &c. So *Cap.* 14. 21, 23. 1 *Cor.* 3. 8. *If any man love God, the ſame is known*; that is, loved, *of him.* But you ſee this Rectoral Love, or Love of Complacency is after our loving of him in order of Nature.

This Love and Mercy of Election, the effect whereof is, ſoftening the Heart, or working the firſt Grace of Converſion, is not of him that willeth and runneth, but of God that ſheweth Mercy, * namely this Mercy; that is, It is not to be aſcribed to mans chooſing Good of himſelf; but to this ſpecial Mercy that cauſed him to chooſe, will and run. But the Rectoral Love, the Love or Mercy of Juſtification and Salvation, is of him that willeth, runneth, ſeeketh, ſtriveth; yea, and is of mans willing and running, formally; I mean only as oppoſed to it's being formally, as of Gods working it in us: Becauſe if a man did it without this ſpecial help of God that maketh, willing he would have right to Heaven, be juſtified. (It would here be great weakneſs for any to ſay, You muſt not make ſuch Suppoſitions; for ſurely we may ſuppoſe, ſuch things as a man hath a natural power to do, and that his heart reproaches him, for not ſo doing: I will only ask a man, making this Objection, this ſilly Queſtion;

* *Hæc gratia quæ occultè humanis cordibus divinâ largitate tribuitur, à nullo duro corde reſpuitur. Ideò quippe tribuitur, ut cordis duritia primitus auferatur.* Aug. de Præd. Sanct. Cap. 8.

on; Did your Heart never reproach you for not being willing to omit that Sin which God did not make you actually willingly to omit?) Alſo, becauſe elſe you muſt ſay, there are no rewards; or, that God rewardeth himſelf and his own Act; which would not be ſenſe, no more than to ſay, Gods putting man into Paradice after he had created him, was the reward of his creating him: And alſo, becauſe the Promiſe is not made to God but to us, and not to God's Act but to ours: The promiſe is not, If God work the condition in us, we ſhall be ſaved; but if we repent and believe; this Law or Promiſe, and ſo this Rectoral Love, taking no notice which way it cometh, ſo it be but performed.

We are not Loved with the Love of Election becauſe we choſe him, or (which comes all to one) becauſe foreſeen to chuſe him; No, in this ſenſe it is ſaid, *You have not choſen me, but I have choſen you, and ordained, that you ſhall bring forth Fruit, and that your Fruit ſhould remain*; that is, He choſe us firſt in this ſenſe. But yet we chuſe him firſt, chuſe the better part firſt, the way of Obedience and Life firſt (when he ſetteth before us Life and Death in Good and Evil, and biddeth us chuſe his ways that we may live) I ſay, firſt in order of Nature before he chuſeth, loveth us, with this Rectoral Love of Complacency, Pardon, Juſtification. Now

Now to answer the difficulty urged; having thus cleared my way. This Rectoral Gospel-Law Love of Justification and Pardon is properly conditional, I mean as to the main substantial and great part of it, which is this; *He that believeth shall not perish, but shall have eternal Life*: For there is some lesser part of this that is not strictly conditional, wherein God hath so kept himself uningaged, that he may with safety to his Truth and Justice use a Liberty arbitrarily, and doth; as in Temporal Punishments, and Temporal Prosperity. And concerning this inferiour part, where in God is left at Liberty, we may pray, God would pardon such a wicked man though he continue wicked, as to temporal Destruction, *e. g.* Relations may lawfully pray that God would not destroy his Estate, or take away suddenly his Life though he continue wicked, they having some dependance on him; though yet they cannot pray, that God would justifie him in the great things of Salvation though he continue wicked. And true Believers may praise God for it as a special Favour, and coming from special Love denyed to many as good or better than themselves, that he doth not many ways make their Lives dreadfully uncomfortable, for those sins they were guilty of before and after Conversion: For this he might arbitrarily have done, and doth so by some sincere Ones. But we cannot rationally

rationally, or properly pray that God would give to a man continuing wicked, the full and moſt properly and uſually called Pardon of his ſins; for this is properly conditional, and this God will not, yea cannot do, with keeping to his inviolable Rule; but it would be as irrational and unlawful as praying for the Dead, To pray he would do it immediately before he hath made a Change in him. Though yet we may pray God, that he would do ſomething in order to his Pardon, and we may pray that God would pardon ſuch in the ſence that Scripture ſometimes uſeth the Word, as when Chriſt ſaid, *Father forgive them, they know not what they do*, he meant, They have highly deſerved to be deſtroyed immediately, and deprived of all Hope and Means; but do thou, even as they are, immediately pardon them ſo far, as to continue Means and Patience to them, and ſtrive with them, and Convert them; and it may more remotely connote, after thou haſt done ſo, fully pardon them (*leſt they ſhould ſee with their Eyes, and be converted, and their ſins be forgiven them.* Mark 4. 12.)

But he did not mean by *Forgive them*, the full pardon immediately: For this would have been to pray for the breach of the Goſpel-Law founded in his Blood. Again, a ſincere Chriſtian can praiſe God for ſpecial grace and favour in turning his Heart, and converting him while he was unconverted, and

and when he did not convert others as good, or better than he: And so, for his justification and Salvation, as more remotely and fundamentally coming from special Grace, (because the working the condition was so); but not formally. But he cannot in praising God, say, that God gave him his justification, pardon, right to Salvation by such special Grace, as that they were denyed to others that were as good, or better than he was (I mean as truly converted as he) when they were conferred upon him. They can say, God converted them, before they were converted in order of Nature; but they cannot truly say, Justification and right to Heaven were conferred on them in order of Nature, before they were converted.

You can only now reply upon me thus; But though God do somthing special for the Salvation of some, which he doth not for the Salvation of others, as good as they, and so without respect to any good thing in them; yet he doth enough for the Salvation of all. I heartily grant it, for I know you cannot in reason mean any more than this, that nothing hinders any mens Salvation, but their own wicked wilfulness: For you cannot mean by it, God takes away every mans unwillingness, maketh every man actually willing, and chooseing the better part.

I am so far from denying this, that I have en-

endeavoured to prove it. You ſee it is my judgment, that none ought to do more than they can do; (taking Can in the ordinary ſenſe.) And if any amongſt * Heathens had done what he could, in ſeeking and ſerving God, he ſhould either for Chriſt's ſake have been accepted with that little knowledg he could attain; or elſe, as *Calvin* ſaith, Comment *Act.* 8. 13. *Rather then he ſhould have periſhed, God would have ſent an Angel to Reveal further things to him.*

* That ſaying of *Claudian* would pleaſe me, had I aſſurance he meant *Deus, natura naturans, — Natura beatis Omnibus eſſe dedit ſi quis cognoverit uti.*

If you ſhall yet reply, and ſay, But *God doth Love and Will the Converſion of every one?* I hold this as much at leaſt as you do: for you do not maintain that he is reſolved actually to convert every man, elſe every man (you ſay your ſelves) would be converted; But you hold that God giveth ſuch means through love to all, that if they did what they ought to do, and therefore could do, they would be Converted and ſo ſaved; and that their Converſion is commanded by him, and is amiable and deſirable to him; and that this is enough to denominate it a willing and deſiring the Converſion of all. If any deny there is any ſuch thing as underſtanding and willing in God properly and univocally ſo called, but only ſomthing that we men cannot conceive of better than un-

der the notion of understanding and willing, and therefore ought so to conceive of it, I should be far from opposing him. And grant that this spoken of, is, to be conceived of by us, as a Willing the Conversion of all: and they that say, this is not to be conceived by us as a Will properly, do contradict expres Scripture, which is to be our rule of our Conceptions; and I dare say they do not consider that what ever objections they do, or can possibly, bring against mens apprehending this as a Volition or Will, the same lye as much against what they do hold. (as any man may find by trying a little) that God approveth of the Conversion of them that will never turn, and their Conversion is amiable, and their refusal offensive and displeasing to him. And I cannot see that you do thus far differ from your moderate opposers, except sometimes in words: for you distinguish thus (when you are to give the meaning of such Scriptures, *viz. Who hath resisted his Will?* He doth whatsoever he will. God will have *Salvos fieri* with an approving Will, but will not with an efficacious Will *omnes Salvos facere.*

But here only is the difference, you say * God doth not with a precise Will, intend the Conversion of any man. And you mean by it, he intendeth not the Conversion of one man more than another, no further

* *Certum est nullius Conversionem præcise intendi.*

ther than by giving to all men, through love, power and means enough, and so leave it to themselves, which is that you call the Approving Will. Now I and your moderate opposers differ from you in this: we hold that he not only willeth so far as you hold it, the conversion of all; but that he precisely intendeth the Conversion of some; which we use to call a decretive Will, or the Will of Purpose, as we call that you agree with us in, the will of precept; the object of one being Event, and of the other Duty. So that here is the difference, I do not hold that God doth less will the Conversion of, or doth less for, or is less gratious to all, than you do, I abhor such a thought; but only that God doth more will the Conversion; and doth more, and is more gratious to some in order to their Salvation than you do. Yea, I could (if it were worth while) shew, that I hold he doth more for, and is more gratious to all that live to years of discretion, in order to their Conversion and Salvation, than is consistent with your principles.

And take notice once for all, that I exclude the case of Infants and Ideots out of this discourse, as being *alien*, and of less concernment in Religion, and also difficult; and so either not to be spoken of here, or spoken more largely to, than can stand with my designed brevity,

If you ſhould yet urge that I hold ſomething irrational: for, what though he be beforehand with all, do enough and more than enough for the Salvation of all, nothing hindering their Salvation, but their own wilfulneſs, and he * forſakes none but thoſe that forſake him, ſo that if he did no more for any, we ſhould be ſatisfied of his juſtice:

* Deus, priusquam deſeratur, neminem deſerit; & multos deſertores ſæpe convertit. Proſp. Reſp. ad obj. 8. Vincent.

Yet why doth he not forſake all equally, that equally forſake him? why doth he give the Goſpel to ſome that are as bad as others that want it? and give grace to ſome that have as highly as others provoked him? And why to ſuch places and perſons in particular? Some pretend to go ſuch a way as to deny theſe things, or where they cannot deny give Reaſons.

I anſwer, I could give you ſomthing like reaſon in general, why he would not forſake all that forſake him, and ſo deſerve his forſaking them, but that would not anſwer the doubt. But why he gives the Goſpel and Grace to ſuch in particular more than others, I confeſs I can give no reaſon, but muſt with the Scripture, reſolve it into his free love and pleaſure, and into his unſearchable judgments, though I doubt not but God hath wiſe reaſons that no man in this fleſh can underſtand. The Univerſity of Heaven will reſolve many ſuch doubts. And it troubles me to ſee learned men attempt

tempt to find out thoſe wayes that we are told are paſt finding out, and it pleaſeth me to ſee their attempts as weak as bold. And I ſhould think it no incivility to bid him Go look, that asketh me reaſons of theſe things. But if any urge me as they did *Eliſha*, that they might go and ſeek, I will only ſay, let them go ſeek in the words of St. *Auſtin*, *de Spir. & lit. cap.* 34. *Si ad illam profunditatem ſcrutandam quiſquam nos coarctet, cur illi ita ſuadetur ut perſuadeatur; illi autem, non item; duo ſola occurrunt interim quæ reſpondere mihi placet; O Altitudo divitiarum! et, Nunquid in iquitas apud Deum? Cui reſponſio iſta diſplicet, quærat Doctiores, ſed caveat ne inveniat Preſumtores.* That is, If any be not ſatisfied with this anſwer, let him go ſeek him a more learned Teacher; but take heed he meet not with a more preſumptuous Teacher. If you ſhall reply, You ſeem to grant you hold ſomthing unaccountable to men, and ſo what ſeems irrational to men:

I Anſwer, I ſhall not altogether deny this, but only will ſay theſe two thiugs.

First; *Remember you are but men; and ſo no more competent judges of the rationality of Gods actings, when he doth not reveal the reaſons of them unto us, (and that it may be, becauſe humane Nature cannot apprehend*

them? than the Beasts are of ours, the distance being without comparison great-

Movet me quod ille perit, ille non: Si verum vis audire, & me movet quia homo sum: Sed si tu homo es, & ego homo sum, ambo audiamus dicentem, O homo! *ipsam naturam infirmam ac debilem alloquitur Apostolus dicens,* O homo, *tu quis es qui respondes Deo? Si posset pecus loqui & dicere Deo, Quare istum hominem fecisti, & me pecudem: nonne juste succenseres & diceres? O pecus, tu quis es,* &c. *Et tu homo es, sed ad Deum pecus es.* Aug. de verb. Apost. Serm 19.

er. Secondly; Though a Rational man in his first undeliberate thoughts would be apt to say, It is fit that all things should be done alike to all, and that God should make no difference, but where free Will makes it; yet these very thoughts do dictate equally, Let Gods government of sinful men be in such a way, as there may be no such prayers or praises for our selves and others, for grace and holiness, as I have before instanced in, to shew this opinion would destroy them. But if all men being so wicked, as it is apparent they are, we judg it rational as right reason doth (yea the reason of some Heathens hath) that we should be such depending creatures, as to pray such Prayers, and to give such thanks and praise for our selves and others, then it is most rational, yea and essential to consistency with our reason, that God should dispose of

of things in ſuch a way for ſubſtance, as they have been imperfectly deſcribed, *viz.* that doing enough for all, there ſhould be ſuch an arbitrarineſs in God, in uſing ſpecial grace to ſome.

And if any man of competent abilities, have any temptation to think otherwiſe, would he but be at the pains deliberately to form any Hypotheſes which are not apparently inconſiſtent with prayers and praiſes, he will find himſelf, I am confident, wonderfully ſtill'd and calm'd, and far from ſaying with *Alfonſus*, *Si ego adfuiſſem, meliùs ordinâſſem.*

If any ſhould object and ſay, You yet bring in the *Stoick* fate, or ſomthing like it. This was an objection againſt *Auſtin*, and you may ſee it well anſwered by him, *Lib. 2. ad Bonifac. cont. duas Epiſt. Pelag. cap.* 5. 6, 7.

I muſt acknowledg, I cannot well underſtand what that Fate ordinarily charged on the *Stoicks* by the Ancients, was, nor how it was conſiſtent with their principles of morality, except they excluded free-will from that *ſeries implexa cauſarum*, all of them that we have any remains of (worth the name of remains) being *Seneca*, *Epictetus* and *Antoninus pius*, who are commonly charged (and *Seneca* truly) with being over great defenders of Free-Will.

But it ſeems clear that they of them, and other Ancients, *Poets*, and others that maintained it, held it upon this ground; that they might clear God of all things that ſeemed irreconcillable to Humane Wiſdom and Juſtice in the Government of the World; So that when any thing ſeemed amiſs, they could ſay, He was, alas, bound by Fate and could not help it, and ſo was Innocent.

I would wiſh thoſe that charge others with holding Fate, to conſider if this following Principle be not like it, viz. *That God doth as much as he may for the Converſion of every one, and that God could not in Juſtice have made* Judas *a Convert as well as* Peter; *elſe he would have done it.* I grant, He is bound in Juſtice, not to condemn any for not doing what they had not power and means to do; *And he hath bound himſelf to ſave all Repenting and Returning Sinners, and none elſe; and ſo is here bound.*

But to ſay, He may not do good, more good in order to ſome mens Converſion, who, if he did it not for them, would periſh as well as others; or may not give the Goſpel to any, unleſs better than others that have it not; is to tye him where Juſtice doth not tye him, nor his Revealed Word; and wherein we grant every King, yea, and Man a Liberty; and would think it amiſs to bind them; & is virtually to ſay, We may not pray

pray for such things for our selves or others, for He is bound: And it is such a way of clearing God as he would not be cleared by, but he would rather have us confess we cannot answer such Difficulties, as this Opinion is maintained to answer.

As for *Seneca*, the most Ancient Stoick Writer that we have, this puts me out of conceit with him, he was a *Pelagian Stoick*, and held God did alike for all to make them Vertuous, Wise, or Happy (he useth these words for the same); and Free-will only caused the difference: And therefore (as it would have been inconsistent with that Principle to hold otherwise) he hath much against Prayer for vertue and praising God for it, and not a word, that I remember for Prayer or Praise, for these or any other benefits, notwithstanding his many other good Instructions.

Unum Bonum est, quod beatæ vitæ causa & firmamentum est, Sibi sufficere. And a little after, *Turpe est Deos fatigare. Quid votis opus est? fac te ipse felicem.* Sen. Ep. 31. *Quàm stultum est optare, cum possis à te impetrare: non sunt ad cœlum elevandæ manus.* Ep 41.

And which is worse, Ep. 53. *Totam Philosophiæ converte mentem, omnes mortales multo antecedes, non multo te Dii antecedent. Quid inter te & illos interfuturum quæris? Diutius erunt. At mehercule, magni Artificis est clausisse totum in exiguo.*

Tantum sapienti sua, quantum Deo omnis ætas patet. Est aliquid quod Sapiens antecedat Deum: Ille naturæ beneficio, non suo, sapiens est. Ep. 53.

But

But *Antoninus* in these particulars, *viz.* In maintaining Free-will, and yet special grace, pleaseth me better than many I have better thoughts of. Toward the end of the first book, he giveth thanks for many special restraints, and particular kindnesses in order to Religion, much like *Plato* before him, that gave thanks to God for it as a special favour (as *Plutarch* in *Mario* tels us) that he was born a *Grecian*, and not a *Barbarian*, and in the time of *Socrates*; things which he knew were not common to all, and he thought were given him out of love, or he could not have given thanks for them. And especially *Antoninus* giveth thanks to God for inclining him to Religion; and then justifieth God, and saith, God hath done much for him by secret helps and suggestions; so that, saith he, I have been only wanting to my self. In the 9th. book, § 40. He proveth the duty of prayer to God to make us better, and answereth the difficulty that the opinion of Free-will makes against it. He thus argues from their common custom of praying for other things, but not for Holiness and Religion. * Either, saith he, God can do nothing, or he

* Ἢ τοι δύναται ἢ θεοὶ, ἢ δύνανται. εἰ μὲν οὖν μὴ δύνανται, τί εὔχῃ. εἰ δὲ δύνανται διατί οὐχὶ μᾶλλον εὔχῃ δίδοναι αὐτοὺς &c.

can;

can; if he cannot, Why do you pray for other things; if he can, Why do not you pray rather for piety; as that you may not inordinately desire any of these worldly things, or not be anxious about them, rather than that you may have these things? But perhaps you will say *These things are things in my own power, things of my own free-will, to choose good or evil; he grants they are so, and therefore, saith he, they are more excellent and desirable then external things, and consequently more to be prayed for; and then addeth * Who hath told you that God will not help in things that belong to your own free-will? do but begin to pray for these things, and thou shalt see what God will do.

* Ἀλλ' ἴσως ἐρεῖς ὅτι ἐν' ἐμοὶ ἐστὶν αὐτὰ σαν, &c.

* τίς δέ σοι εἶπεν, ὅτι ἰσχὺ ἡ εἰς τὰ ἐν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς συναμοσάνυσι; ἄρξαι γοῦν περὶ τούτων καὶ εὐθέως βλέψεις. &c.

And *Epictetus* speaketh some-where to the same purpose. It must be from a shortness of discourse for any not to see, especially if he read that place, that *Antoninus* is against the opinion of them that hold, God will only give men a power of Willing Good & Evil, but will not keep any men from willing Evil, or which is

is all one, not except they continue not willing it; nor will cauſe any to Will good any further, however, not except they continue Willing it, which is in ſenſe, if ſenſe, He will not do it at all.

As for that which is ordinarily meant by Fate in this angry Charge, you may as truly be charged with it (though untruly) as your moderate Oppoſers: For you hold (whatſoever ſome little Retainers that know not your mind, or their own, ſay) that it is a known certainty to God from Eternity, who ſhall be Converted and Perſevere, and who not; and alſo that he hath decreed in particular, and *in individuo*, ſuch to Salvation, and ſuch to Condemnation upon this foreſight, and that it will certainly and eventually be ſo; not one Perſon more or leſs, eventually doing otherwiſe, and being otherwiſe in the end dealt with. You well * underſtand how this Decree is conſiſtent with Mans Freedom. And yet theſe are Difficulties, and require a long and operous intention of mind to underſtand their conſiſtency. And ſome of ſhort heads will be offended at this your Opinion,

* *Origen* clearly anſwereth that cavil of *Celſus* viz. [That muſt be and cannot be otherwiſe, which God hath fore-known or fore-told] by diſtinguiſhing and ſhewing how it can, and cannot be otherwiſe. *Cont. Celſ. Lib.* 2 *Philocal. Cap.* 25.

pinion, not understanding the Consistency of it with mans natural Freedom of Will, and the Gospel-Promises; or will make it like Fate to themselves. It would yet be a false Charge for any to say, that according to your Opinion and Principle, what God hath decreed concerning mens future Estate must be, and cannot be otherwise, taking such words in the ordinary Sense; for though there be a Truth in this Charge, in a Sense remote from the vulgar use of such Words; yet according to the ordinary and most obvious Sense of such words, this Accusation is false; which is, that men have not Free-will to do good or not do it; or else; if they have, that they are concluded antecedently to the use of it, that, do what they can, turn to God, or not turn, their final Estate shall not be ordered according to their thus turning or not, which is false. And some it may be will undo, or have undone themselves for ever, upon mis-apprehensions of your meaning, and their false Conclusions drawn from it.

So here, I know it doth follow from what I say, that though God do enough (yea, and more than enough) for all, or will not condemn them for not doing what they had not Power and Means enough to do; yet if He do arbitrarily more for some, I mean arbitrarily as not being any way bound to do it, as having made no such promise to

them

them or others properly so called, though there are such Intimations, commonly called halfe-Promises, that it is probable he may (though he may refuse) make such a man willing of unwilling, upon others praying to him in particular for such as bad or worse than others; and also sometimes without any such particular Prayers of others for them; I say, it doth follow from this, that where he doth such arbitrary things, he willed or decreed to do so from Eternity upon such Prayers of others, or without them as the case is, he being Immutable and Omnipresicient.

Yet people in going so high in their ordinary Conceptions, would be very apt to make this like Fate to themselves, as it is apparent they do that apprehend, as if such volitions were not now as arbitrary to God as ever: For this is to destroy the right and true Conceptions of such things, as are meerly done by him *prolibitu*, to think that he is by Decree bound, so as they are not now arbitrary.

And therefore, as a man that is deliberating, and thinking upon a return to God, must not go and conceive, It is a meerly arbitrary thing to God, whether he will receive me to Happiness or no; this would be an Errour: For God is bound, hath bound himself to receive him; and would have us conceive of him as bound by his Promise;

and

and he must not go and think (though confessed true by both Parties) it is in a true Sense determined by God, whether I shall be saved or not, he knowing whether I would return to him or no; but he ought to consider, God is not at liberty upon my turning to accept or reject me; For he is bound by his promise, if I turn I shall live; and this Decree, or Will of God is well consistent with this Promise, and I must make my Notions of the Decrees of God to give way to this Promise, and by no means make this Promise give way to them; For so far as my Notions of his Decrees contradict this Promise really, so far they are false: And that Notion about Gods determination which men, versed in such things, can conceive consistent with this, is built upon his high infinite unsearchable understanding and fore-knowledge, what I would do through my free-will only, or through Grace assisting it.

So when a man is Praying, or designing to Pray for a thing that is arbitrary to God *e. g.* for the Conversion of such a Relation (as *Monica* for her Son *Austin*) he ought not to rise so high as to think *God* hath decreed, whether he will convert him or no, in hearing my Prayer or no; and so though *God* be a gracious *God* hearing Prayers, and hath commanded me to Pray thus for him, and is apt to be moved with Prayers,

ers, yet this Decree may hinder the ſucceſs of this Petition.

For this would be an erroneous Conception, and to conceive his Decree to be as Ill, and much like the Stoick Fate: For it is to conceive it is not now arbitrary to *God* to be moved with my Prayers; but it is to conceive though it was at *firſt* arbitrary to him, yet it is not ſo now, but he is precluded and bound, and ſo it is to conceive ſuch a Decree as is ſomething diſtinct from his preſent Will. This is, I ſay, to hold Fate, as * *Seneca* doth: for he maketh Fate (which is well ſpoken thus far) to be nothing elſe but an Eternal Determination of *God* concerning future things: But then (which is a very ſinful Conception of him) he looks upon it as though it was free to *God* to determine things at firſt, yet now he is bound by it and cannot help it, ſo that things are not now arbitrary to him being thus bound, *Eadem neceſſitate* (ſaith he, ſpeaking of Fate) *Deos alligat. Ille ipſe omnium conditor & Rector ſcripſit quidem fata, ſed ſequitur: Semper paret, ſemel juſſit.* Sen. de provid. *Lib.* 5. Which is a very irrational Conception, leaning upon his Heatheniſh Apprehenſion, that things may now fall out to move his

* Alſo *Homer* maketh Fate to be Διὸς Βυλὴ, *Jupiters* ancient Determination, and yet *Iliad.* 16. brings in *Jupiter* weeping and lamenting, that his Darling *Sarpedon* muſt be ſlain by *Patroclus*, for *Jupiter* could not help it, becauſe it was fatal to him.

his Will that were not in his Eternal Willing foreſeen, or particularly apprehended, elſe they might move it now if at Liberty. And every one of our ſhort and finite underſtandings at the firſt notion, as ſoon as we hear or think of an Eternal Decree, are apt to have the like Apprehenſions, till our Reaſons pry a little more into it; as if His Eternal Thoughts and Willing, did not graſp and comprehend all theſe Prayers to be made, as being objected as clearly to him as preſent from all Eternity, to move his Will in the ſenſe wherein we muſt underſtand them to move his Will now.

Let me adviſe all to take heed of ſpeaking or thinking of ſuch things as theſe I am now ſpeaking of; as if they were not free to Him now; as if they were not now to be done *pro libitu*; as if his Decree was once his Will, but is now ſomething we are to have a notion of beſides his preſent Will; as if the doing of ſuch arbitrary things was not now arbitrary; as if there was ſomething tyed him beſides his Juſtice and Promiſe, beſides his own preſent moſt-free will. Take heed of that Notion, as if he was as much bound by Decrees, or as really, as by Juſtice and Promiſe.

But do you conceive of theſe things meerly of his Will, as being at preſent the freeſt things imaginable, even altogether as free to him as if they were to begin now?

I mean things of this Nature, that he is no way bound to do, unleſs you will ſay, bound by his Will and Decree, (which we cannot call binding, but in ſuch a contradictious ſenſe; as if we ſhould ſay, a man that hath free Choice given him, is bound to do what he will;) as in giving, or continuing the Goſpel to a People, wherein you are to conceive him ſo free as that he may, or may not be moved with your Prayers for them, even as free as if to begin to determine now. And ſo when you Pray for a good Nights ſleep, which *God* may or may not give you upon Prayer; you muſt not think, It may be in vain for me to Pray, for he hath decreed I ſhall not have it: this is to hold * Fate, and to think there is ſomething may hinder him from hearing your Prayers, beſides his preſent Will, and it is to have unworthy Thoughts of *God*, and to hold an Opinion, overthrowing all Religion, if held practically; and it is vertually to deny, this Prayer was objected before him in his Willing or Decreeing this Nights Sleep. Yet it is very hard when we go ſo high in our Thoughts, to get this Fate out of our minds.

* *Deſine fata Deûm flecti ſperare precando.* Virg Æn. 2.

And therefore, take a man of the vaſteſt Comprehenſions in this World, and cleareſt

cleareſt in his Notions about theſe things, and their Conſiſtency with *Gods* preſent Freedom; yet they are ſo intricate, and require ſuch Intention of the mind to underſtand them conſiſtent, that it is his duty in Prayer for theſe arbitrary things, to apprehend and conceive as if *God* was now to begin to Will them: and ſuch Apprehenſions are not falſe Apprehenſions, but only inadequate Apprehenſions; and that which the contrary Apprehenſion would immediately ſuggeſt into his mind, would be falſe, viz. *That it is not now as arbitrary to him to be moved with Prayer, as if he was to begin to be moved with Prayer now.*

If any ſhould object; What, may we pray to *God* as apprehending, as if he was to decree ſuch things *de novo*, to begin to Decree now? May we pray that he would change his Decree?

I anſwer, You may, and you may not. Do but conſider, that by the Decree of *God*, you mean no more than the Will of *God*, and this may immediately call to mind, that you often pray to *God*, that he would do things which you fear he will do not, or doubt he will not do; and that he would not do things to the Perſon, Family, or Nation, you fear he is in Anger bent to do;

this you do frequently, and yet do well.

I grant you may not pray that *God* would alter his Decree, or begin to decree, in the notion that the Word Decree, is used by the custom of speaking on both sides to signifie; for it is used by almost constant custom, to denote the Will of *God* under the very Notion of Eternal, and so signifieth by common use the same that these very words [*To will from Eternity*] would do. Now if a man should pray *God* to will in this sense, or begin to will or change his decree in this sense, it would be in effect, to pray in expres's Words, and Formally under that very Notion, that he would not Will that now', he Willed from Eternity; which would not be only to pray, not considering his Immutability, but to pray him to put off his Attribute of Immutability, which would be foolish and sinful, and contrary to the result of our deliberate Conceptions, concerning his Essence.

But take the Will of *God* as we are bound to do in ordinary duties * abstractly from that Consideration, that whatsoever he can will he always Willed; and we may have, yea ought (or we should otherwise sin) to have such Apprehensions as if he was now to begin to Will it: yea, we ought to pray that he

* *Abstractione præcisionis, sive abstractione Simplici; non abstractione negationis, sive compositâ.*

he will do such arbitrary things, as we have some reason to fear he will not do, as when we pray for such a wilful Sinner's Conversion; we ought to consider *God* in this Duty (or we could not be serious and fervent) as one that may, if he please, be moved with the present Duty; and we are not in our Addresses to consider him, as one whose Will was to be moved, or the Request to be arbitrarily denied with this present Prayer foreseen from Eternity.

It would be a weak pretence for any to reply; We pray only in Obedience, and not to attain the things prayed for; or to say, We do not pray to incline, or to move *Gods* will; or to say, We pray for the thing, but not to incline *Gods* will: If so, you pray only with your Lips, but not with your Hearts; it is to say, We pray for the thing, but not, *ut velit*, that *God* would do it; which is in effect to say, We pray it may be done without, or against his Will, or, We do not pray he would do it out of Love or good Will.

As you are to conceive *God* hath a Will, or you would have sinful Conceptions; so you are to conceive of *God* as being moved with his Peoples Prayers; and the contrary Conception to this would be false: For it would be this, That it is all one to *God* in giving benefits, whether they pray or pray not, for the attaining of those benefits: And

then if you conceive of God, as moved with prayer, you can conceive nothing moved by prayers, but his Will.

I expect that ſome will yet ſay, You make God the Author of Sin and mens miſery; for if you hold that God doth more for the Converſion of ſome, than others, then you hold he doth leſs for the Converſion of ſome than others, and that he did not Will to do ſo much for them as others as bad as they. I would ſtop mens mouths, if poſſible. You muſt be ſo ignorant as not to underſtand what I have ſaid, or you muſt grant, that ſince I do not make him the Author of ſin, in turning ſome men actually from ſin, which is a contradiction, that therefore I make him the Author of ſin and mens miſery in thoſe Aſſertions wherein I comply with you, for I hold: He doth for all men, as much as you do toward their Converſion; I mean, ſetting a-ſide the ſecond power which (becauſe I have a greater diſlike of, than I can expreſs) I will ſhew you it is nothing, but what I grant every man hath, *viz.* meer humane Nature, or it is worſe than nothing.

And I will, if I can, make it very plain, that all may take heed leſt, upon any fair pretence whatſoever, they ſhould aſcribe no more to Grace than

Pelagi-

* *Pelagius* did, that at last found out a way to use the word Grace, and Gods giving men Grace to obey, but meant by it, meerly Gods giving the Natural power of free-will, which a man cannot be a man without, or sin without, confounding Nature and Grace, as *Austin* complains.

+ *Non dicit Christus, Omni qui audivit à patre & didicit, venire potest ad me, sed venit.*

Venire possè in naturâ ponit Pelagius, *vel etiam, ut mod dicere capit, in gratiâ.* Aug. lib. 1. de gr. at. advers. Pelag & Celest. cap. 10.

Sub ambiguâ generalitate quid sentivet aliscondens; gratiæ tamen vocabulo frangens invidiam, offensionemque declinans, ibid. cap. 37.

It is a First-born of wonders to me, that so many learned men should with confidence maintain that a man is not to blame, or not inexcusable in not chusing Good, or not refusing Evil, except he be made by Grace, through Christ, ἰσόῤῥοπος, and ἀμφιῤῥοπὴς, that is, having a Will as equally enclined to Good as Evil; which is, at least, to say, No man sins, or is to blame, except he be a better man than ordinary. And it is the like wonder to me, that they should not see, The effect of the Grace spoken of in Scripture, and prayed so much for, and disputed so much concerning these Controversies, is somthing that men can possibly sin without, can sin though God deny it them: for we need not, yea, cannot rationally pray for it,

to keep us from ſin, if we cannot ſin without it.

And now I am ſpeaking of wonders, take this alſo into the number, that thoſe learned men on the other ſide, that hold, that men can, and do ſin, and are to blame, though God do deny them that Grace ſpoken of, to keep them from ſin; that yet they ſhould deny that men in ſome true ſenſe can do otherwiſe without it: For this is to ſay, that all our Repentance is only for doing ſomthing that we could in no ſenſe have done otherwiſe.

Now, leſt you ſhould ſuſpect that I ſpeak thus vehemently without reaſon, againſt this *æquilibrium*, that it is pretended Grace only gives; let me obtain leave to digreſs a little farther, to put you out of this ſuſpition. *Tully de nat. Deorum*, tells us of One arguing thus, *As giving Wine to ſick perſons often doth hurt, and ſeldom good; and therefore it is better never to give Wine to ſick people: So it had been better that Man had not been indued with Reaſon, becauſe it doth more men hurt than good.* Now we can well anſwer this Objection; The complaint is unreaſonable, becauſe we had not been men without Reaſon; and, what hurt cometh to men by their Reaſon, is through their own default; and, much good might come by it, did they uſe it aright. But me thinks it may be made apparent, that that called Grace, which

which ſome will only admit, would, as they explain it, be really unlucky and miſchievous, and no benefit can poſſibly be aſſigned to come to men by it. And becauſe I would not be over-large, ſo as to weary you in making this out, let me beg I may take theſe things for granted, and not be put to prove them; and I think I am not immodeſt in my begging. Firſt; *That multitudes of men will periſh.* Secondly, *That all would have been ſaved eternally in Heaven, that ſhould not ſin, or diſobey God in any thing; I mean, that there is no middle ſtate between Heaven and Hell for men.* Thirdly; That I may have leave to take their explications of this general Grace, that maintain and plead for it, without naming the Authors, who are many, and deſervedly much eſteemed in other things; and I will not mention by way of diſparagement any needleſly. Any one may ſoon ſee whether I ſet down their explications of it *bonâ fide* or no; yea, any one may underſtand that every one of theſe things following, are eſſential to it, to ſupport it, that it be not either needleſs to the making men culpable, and inexcuſable, that have the Natural faculty; or meerly giving the faculties; or no way ſubſerving their deſigne, to avoid eſpecial Grace; that is, Gods doing ſomthing for one, in order to his Salvation, that he doth not for another, and that without re-

reſpect to any good in him. Now their Affirmations concerning it are theſe. *Firſt*, This Grace is given to all men alike. *Secondly*, The Effect of this Grace is a thing, that men would be found men without; I mean, men in their right Wits, having the right Natural uſe of their Faculties without it. For they affirm that to ſay, Grace only, giveth the Natural Faculties, would be *Pelagianiſm*; and deny they mean by *Gods* grace, this giving the Natural Power. *Thirdly*, They call this, which I call the Natural Power and the Faculties, the remote Power of Willing and Obeying, but they call that which grace giveth to all men *Proximam potentiam*, a next, Proximate Power; which is not given to make men * Actually willing, and Actually to Believe and Obey, but to give men a *Proximam potentiam*, a ſecond next Power of Believing and Obeying if they would. The Effect of Grace is ſay they, to give a man ſuch Power as putteth him in *bivio*, in an *Equipoize*: giveth him a more full ſecond Power of chooſing

* Take notice I do grant, that they do ſay, this Grace is given to make men Actually willing, and they uſe to complain that they miſ-repreſent them that ſhould ſay, they hold that God doth not make thoſe Actually willing that are ſo: For he that giveth the *Talent*, doth in a true ſenſe cauſe the Improvement of it. But they tell us, They mean Grace give h men Actually to Will no further than this common way, by giving a power of Chooſing or Refuſing; And if I have any Expreſſions that may ſeem contrary to this, I ſo far wrong them.

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ing Good and Evil; by this he is enabled more proximately to obey the Gospel if he would. *Fourthly*, They say, a man would have been in no fault in not believing and obeying the Gospel, if *God* had not in Grace given him this proximate Power; he could not have sinned in not repenting, or believing without this Power which Grace giveth, and that for this Reason; because he could not but disobey the Gospel without it, and could not but * Sin without it: And to say that he could do otherwise than sin without it, say they, would be *Pelagianism*. *Fifthly*, They say, it is no sin for a man to do a thing a man could not but do, or omit a thing he could not but omit.

* They mean without doubt materially; do that Act which is materially Sin without it.

Now let any man, if these things be so, tell me, what this Grace (passively taken) this proximate Power, that Grace (Actively taken) giveth, is good for:

First, you cannot say to make them Men; for they would have been as perfect men without it.

Secondly, You cannot say, That they might be enabled to Obey the Gospel: For what Loss would there have been to men if they had not Obeyed the Gospel? There would have been, according to these Principles, no need of Obeying of it, if this proximate Power had not been given: Because they could not have Obeyed the Gospel with-

without it; and so because they could not, it would have been no Sin in them, no Disobedience not to obey the Gospel, though they had been sound men. And to deny this would be to grant what I have proved; and what they oppose, That men are to blame in not doing what they have the Natural Faculties to do, though they have not this proximate Power of Grace: And also would make it needless for this end, *viz.* To make them inexcusable.

Thirdly, You cannot say that this Grace was neeeful that men might be saved; For they would be saved if they did not Sin, and they could not Sin without this Grace, giving the proximate Power; because they could not but Sin without it; could not but Disobey the Gospel without it: And therefore it would have been no Disobedience, or Culpableness, because they could not do otherwise; and therefore all men would have been saved if this Grace had not been given, for they could not have been Condemned for no fault, and therefore must have been saved.

Fourthly, You cannot say, But though they would not if this Grace had been denyed, have been Condemned for Disobeying the Gospel; yet they would have been Condemned for breaking the Law: For according to these Principles, they could not but Disobey the Law without this Grace; and there-

therefore it would have been no Sin in them to Disobey the Law, and they could not be Condemned, because they could not do otherwise than do it, and so they would have been saved.

Obj. *But you will say, Your Accusation is too high; for if this Grace be granted to do no good to men, yet surely it doth them no hurt.*

Ans. Yea, according to these Principles if it be but granted, That some men will perish; for none would have perished had not this proximate Power been given; because, as they say, they could not have done otherwise, and so, as they say, it would have been no Fault, and *God* could not have Condemned men for it; and so there being no middle state, all would have been without this Grace, sound and perfect men here, and might have lived jolly and jovial Lives, and have been saved at last in Heaven.

You cannot tell me, I cannot answer these Difficulties: For you have seen or may see, how this distinction of *Natural* and *Moral Impotency*, if admitted, doth unty, or rather cut all these Knots, by shewing; This Grace of theirs is needless, for the end assigned by them to it, *viz. To make men inexcusable by giving them Power of Willing, and Power to Obey if they would;*

and

and that Grace which they deny, is necessary (in a right sense) *to a greater end, to make men Actually willing.*

I could further shew you the Inconsistency with it self, and the Contradiction to Scripture, and the *danger of this Tenent, which yet is a Foundation-Principle of some Discourses, viz. *That the Impotency that the Scripture speaks of upon men to any good, is not* (*to the immediate Duty to be performed*) *either upon good or bad men now, nor was then, else they had been blamless* (say they) *in not doing that Duty: but only it signifieth what would have been upon men, if that Grace through Christ had not taken it off from all.* But I have spoken enough for them that will consider words of Sobriety and Truth, and too much for them that will not.

*It might truly be said, if this Opinion of theirs was true; That men can, for any Imporency whatsoever on them to the contrary, so live all their Lives, as not to need Pardon, or Christ's Satisfaction for any of their Omissions or Commissions.

Obj. *But whence came this* Moral Impotency?

I will not say, What is that to you? (because it is something to you): but I will say, What have you to do to ask this here? For I am not now speaking about it, and you have no need to aske it for the Understanding of what

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I have ſpoken; It can ſtand on its own legs, without flying to that forrein, or more remote help; however I am reſolved to try it for a time, for ſome Reaſons. I anſwer, Firſt, It came not from God, he made man upright.

Secondly; The Scripture teacheth you how ſin came into the world, and much is ſaid, and may be ſaid of that, to juſtifie God againſt mens accuſations; and much may be ſaid for our encreaſing it on our ſelves; But my buſineſs is deſignedly not to intereſt this diſcourſe in it,

Thirdly; Let it come which way it will, you ſee it doth not excuſe, and ſo do all men, whatſoever they ſay to the contrary. * *Non reſert ſcelus unde, &c.*

Fourthly; You ſee, or may ſee (I ſpeak adviſedly) that there is no Impotency can hinder your Salvation, but what you may prevail againſt, if you would: for I have ſhewed you it differs not from the Will, not in *ſpecie*.

Take notice I have not at all denyed Natural Impotency on us (for I ſhould then contradict my own judgment) but only ſay, it excuſes ſo far as it hinders.

There is much of Natural Impotency to many deſirable things, yea, in the beſt in this life, as a puniſhment, or product of *Adams* Fall, and much as a puniſhment, or effect of our (in a ſtricter ſenſe) own ſins, *e. g.*

e. g. many ignorances, and roving extravagancies of the mind, melancholly, yea, and natural desires or inclinations in the sensitive part of the affections, which are not at all subject to the Will and understanding. And God may and doth heal such things by degrees, by way of reward, upon prayer and endeavours of his people, for their comfort, help, and encouragement in their Christian course; And also it may be, that repeated contrary-acts, and repeated denials, do in a natural way lessen some altogether involuntary sensitive desires. But these things, though done by God and his Spirit, may be matter of the promissory part of his promises, but not of the mandatory or conditional part of them; however not immediatly, that is till those impediments be removed, and in the mean time, we are to use those means that we are to expect the removal of them in. I do believe, that not only the rational part of the affections, and that part which is now subject to the Will, but the most sensitive part of them, was subject to the Will in *Adam*, before his Fall, and that he could not say, as we, *I would not be troubled, or affraid, or put into a trembling, but cannot help it; I would have the more affecting and sensible part of joy, but cannot.*

But now alas, if a man would as much as he can, without any unwillingness, many such

such passions cannot be caused, or prevented; and some desireable passions are caused, when our desires and volitions of them, are less vehement; and consequently, when we less please God in our duties, being more wanting in our duty and obedience.

There is such a thing as Obligation and Duty growing upon us; that becomes duty, that was not so before, upon some Natural inward impediment removed by God's Spirit or otherwise; so that after, it would be ones sin not to do, or not to do to such a measure, things which before were not a duty, (however immediately) and yet things greatly desireable, and their want to be lamented.

But there is a present Obligation, and it is the present duty of every man that hath his faculties and an objective evidence, this day to perform the Gospel condition, to consent heartily to the obedience of Faith, and resove to hold on; and if he did this which he hath the Natural power to do, and should dye, he should be saved; else he might say, I would, and thou would not; and not only his duty to do somthing that may mediately and remotely tend to this, else we must say It is not his duty this day to Repent and Believe, and he doth not sin in not doing it; but only in not doing somthing else that may remotely tend to it. *e. g.* It is not this day a mans duty to read the

Scriptures that cannot, and ſo not his ſin he doth not, though he had opportunities to learn and ſinfully loſt them; but only it is his ſin, that he doth not lament ſuch loſs of opportunities, and that he doth not reſolve and endeavour to uſe ſuch means whereby he may learn; and when he can read, it will be his duty to read. So if a man complain of diſtractions, and a ſhattered head and thoughts in duty, and that theſe came on him by his own former negligence, we muſt ſay he is to lament theſe as an affliction and chaſtiſement for his ſin; but they are formally ſins only, ſo far as they do not diſpleaſe him enough, ſo far as his Will is not enough ſet againſt them; and it is not his duty to have his duties free from them, if his greateſt deſire cannot attain it; But it is his preſent duty to pray againſt them, and to uſe Gods means to be freed; and when they are once ſubjected by God, more or leſs to his Will, then it would be his ſin to have his duties torn, or ſo partly torne proportionably, becauſe then it cometh for want of preſent due care and watchfulneſs.

As for the Affections or Paſſions, I judg, as * many others, that the chief rational

* *Intereſt autem qualis ſit voluntas hominis, quia ſi perverſa eſt, perverſos habebit hos motus: Si autem recta eſt, non ſolum inculpabiles, verum etiam laudabiles erunt. Voluntas eſt quippe in omnibus; imo omnes nihil aliud quam voluntates ſunt. Nam quid eſt cupiditas, & lætitia, niſi voluntas in eorum conſenſionem quæ volumus? Et, quid eſt metus atq; triſtitia, niſi voluntas in diſſenſionem ab his quæ nolumus* Aug. de Civ. Dei, Cap. 6. lib 14.

part

part of what we call the affections both concupiſcible and iraſcible, is but the very motion, the inclination or averſation of the Will, reſpectively differing according to the variety of the objects apprehended as Good or Evil, preſent or abſent, eaſily or difficultly attainable or avoidable, *e. g.* Love is a complacency of the Will, deſire a volition of a thing abſent, and this very deſire, were the thing preſent, or preſent in the imagination, would be joy; and if ſo, the chief part of the affections is elicited and not imperated. And as for the more paſſionate and ſenſitive part of them which is imperated by the Will, this may be ſaid, that in ſome the more ſenſitive part is more ſubject to the Will than in others; and only ſo far as they are ſubject to the Will, they are capable of ſin; and ſo far only as they are not willed enough, or not nilled enough, they are ſinful.

And that Diſtinction of the School-men may be applyed unto them all, and be of much uſe to us. *Amor, dolor, timor*; *affectivus* and *appretiativus*; affective love and appretiative love. By the appretiative, they mean the more rational and leſs ſenſitive part of the affections. Take this inſtance, ſuppoſe the Husbands of two Women are dead; one Wife, it may be none of the moſt loving, is exceſſive in ſenſible ſorrow, the other a more loving

Wife is more compoſed, and cannot obtain of her ſelf that paſſionate ſtirring of grief. Now this is a ſure rule to go by, to judg who loved moſt; ſhe doth the more truely love, and more truly grieve that would give moſt of what is dear to her, to redeem his life. It may be one would give much, the other that hath overflowing paſſions but a little. If a man do Will and deſire God and things above, above all the world, ſo as to put him on all endeavours, this is the true rational Love, and would be accepted, though he ſhould not have the more ſenſible paſſionate affective part: So, if he have ſuch a real diſplicency and diſlike of ſin, ſo as he would give all the world to be freed from offending God; this would be accepted without the more paſſionate and ſenſible grief.

But yet the more ſenſible part of the affections is greatly deſireable, and the want ordinarily to be lamented, and God giveth it as a reward & ſenſible encouragement to his people. And it is without doubt wonderful difficult, and it requires a great meaſure of Grace to keep the Will conſtant and reſolved, with full purpoſe of heart cleaving to the Lord, when affections have not theſe ſenſible taſts in paſſionate complacencies and meltings, which are ſenſible encourageing ſmiles from above; I mean (for there may be great deceit here) when

when in Conjunction with the integrity of the heart and Will. But the main thing we are to enquire after, and judg our ſelves by, is the appretiative part, the more voluntary and rational part.

Pardon ſuch expreſſions as theſe, which I have uſed, (partly careleſly, and partly for explication ſake, that I might the better be underſtood.) He can Will it if he would, or he cannot Will it if he would, which hypothetical ſpeeches are not proper. You may indeed ſay of imperate acts that a man can do them if he would, or cannot if he would; But of the elicite acts that are no way imperated, you muſt only ſay, he can Will, or he cannot Will a thing ſimply: or he hath, or hath not the Natural power, or δύναμιν, or faculty of Willing the thing; or he hath or hath not the Moral power, of Willing it. And I confeſs alſo, it is not proper to ſay, A man can believe, perform the Goſpel-condition if he would, but ſimply he can perform it: for it is in effect to ſay he can conſent if he would. But the impropriety here is competently well hidden, by the variety of expreſſion, and the vulgar taking of it as differing from volition, as if it was rather imperated than elicited by the Will. Yet I have uſed ſome expreſſions (and I doubt not, properly) that ſeem to contradict this, as when I ſay a good man would fain

draw on his Will further to Good, and further from Evil; that is, he would Will good more. But ſuch paſſages if well conſidered, do not, I think, contradict this really. Let this be weighed a little; Any one that ſpeculatively conſiders his own Souls actings may perceive that there is not only a direct act of the Will, a direct volition that is carried ſtraight forward, to its external object; but a reflex act of the Will, that hath an act of the Will for its object; elſe a man would not pray for the willing of Good. A man may not only Will that which is Good, which is the direct act, but may Will and deſire, that he did Will and deſire ſuch a thing more; and this ſecond or reflex act is really a Will, a volition, being upon reaſons, and alſo diſtinct from the other direct volition, having a quite differing object, and whether it be poſſible to go further with another reflex act terminated on this reflect act is a queſtion, but I ſuppoſe one may. But then (which keeps truth in what I have ſpoken) It ſeems the direct act of Willing is eſſentially before the reflex; and that a man cannot Will he did Will ſuch a thing, till firſt he do Will it really, or (which comes all to one) he cannot Will he did not Will ſuch a thing till firſt we have a direct averſation of his VVill to it. A wicked man cannot remiſsly VVill he did VVill that which is

Good

Good (as it is granted he may) till first he have a direct remiss Will to it : and if this was not so, it would object before us a most perplexing difficulty. Though yet to come to a meer sensitive appetite, a man may desire he had it, though he have it not; or that he had it not, though he have it. So that this doth not contradict what was said : for in propriety a man cannot Will a thing if he would, except he do Will it.

And also I said, an Act of the Will, which is meerly elicited ; But here (which is strange) we must grant such a thing as the Will imperating a volition, or *quasi* imperating a volition, distinct from eliciting one. And yet this reflex volition cannot, I think, possibly have any imperated effect of its imperating a volition immediatly to increase the direct volition immediately; but only can encrease it by putting a man on the use of such means as may encrease the direct volition. As for example, A man doth by this reflex Will for some good reasons, will and desire he did will and desire, and love God and holiness more; This reflex will, though in its own Nature, and formally it comprehendeth more of volition, yet it doth not cause a man to love, desire or Will God and Goodness more, with the direct act immediatly ; but only it causeth a man to pray for it, and read and meditate on such things as may encrease the

direct volition; ſo that the direct act is not ſubject to the imperation of the reflex act at all immediately; but yet it is remotely; for the reflex act puts him on uſeing means to get a more clear, or more abiding apprehenſion of the worth and goodneſs of the object, to cauſe a higher and more practical dictate of the underſtanding, that the direct act of the Will may be thereby encreaſed; it excites and ſets that on work that can prevail.

Let any one try if any uſe may be made of this, either to diſcover the prevailing intereſt and bent of the Soul more fully, or any other way. Any attempt of mine, I ſee, will be in vain here; ſuch things are too wonderful for me. What boldneſs is it, for men that know their own Souls nature and acts ſo little, to pretend to know more of God and his actings, who curiouſly wrought this Soul, than he hath revealed to us?

I ſhall account what I have here written loſt in part, if it have not ſome good effect upon the Readers in reference to their Morals, as well as intellectuals; And therefore will add ſomthing by way of practical application, and hope therein to anſwer ſome objections that may yet be in your thoughts.

USE I.

HOw much to blame are thoſe that dread not Extreams? It is very common with men, when once they are fully convinced that there is a dangerous errour on one hand, to be careleſs how far they run on the other hand; and to entertain an errour as dangerous, and maintain it to help againſt the other; though it may prove as incommodious to their Souls, as once our predeceſſors found it to the State, when they fetcht in the *Saxons* to drive out the *Pictſ*.

St. *Auſtin* tells us it was the great care of every Orthodox Teacher in his time, to take heed leſt they ſhould ſo defend Grace, as to deny free-will; and leſt they ſhould ſo defend free-will, as to deny Grace: and a good care it was. *Lib. 2. de peccat. merit. cap. 18.*

Some have ſpoken againſt Free-will to good in any ſenſe, have ſpoken without fear of over-ſpeaking of mans Impotency to Good, without any check or limitation; yea, and called it a Natural Impotency in the ſenſe explained; and however cuſtome hath ſo obtained, that the moſt underſtand it (without explication) of a Natural Impotency, which to affirm, is virtually to lay mans

mans destruction at *Gods* Door, notwithstanding Christs Death and the Gospel, and to clear Man. How sad it should be to us, that many have expressed themselves in such terms, (though they did contradict it again virtually) that if wicked men had Believed them (without doubt they had such checks of Conscience, that they did not) they might have encouraged their Hearts, as if their refusal of Christ and Grace was not their Malignity and Wickedness; was not a Moral thing, but their Weakness, as opposed to Moral and Voluntary; a Weakness opposed to Wilfulness, or however different from it, a Cannot distinct from Wil'-not; which every one hath a Notion that a man may be pitied, but not blamed for. If any say I have spoken thus, and held thus; but now see it is an Errour subverting the very Foundation: but while I did hold it, I held it only Cloudily and Notionally, but I did practically hold the contrary, or I could not have Reproved others, or Repented of my former Sins: I readily believe you, and shall only say, Learn Charity to those that differ from you.

Again, some have so defended Free-will, that they have maintained, that *God* giveth to Men only a power of Chooling God and Evil, and will go no further with any. If any such are sensible that Blasphemy to the Spirit

Spirit is written on the Fore-head of this Opinion, and that it makes the Spirits, help needleſs to a Man of ſound Intelectuals; having a ſufficient objective Evidence, and ſhall ſay, I held this only Notionally; for I did pray, which I could not have done had I held it practically: I ſhall ſay the ſame, I readily believe it, do you alſo learn Charity.

If any ſhould tell me I am too Charitable, in granting that Men may hold Errors deſtructive of Religion, Notionally and Doctrinally, and yet hold the contrary Truth Practically. I anſwer, I know I am not, and any obſervant Man ſees it very frequent. If you ſhould reply ſurely no Man holdeth Contradictions; quite contrary Opinions, however no judicious Man. Yea, I may confidently ſay, every judicious Man doth ſo, ſince every man in this World holdeth ſome Errours; and this may convince you, *viz.* If there be any man that you think you can truly Convince of an Errour he holds, you do equally think he holds Contradictions; Becauſe elſe you could not think you could Confute him, or ſo much as rationally Diſpute with him, if you did not think he agreed in ſomething with you, even in that which you will make your medium to Convince him, by ſhewing that his erroneous Opinion contradicts that which he agrees with you in. And you alſo

ſo judge that he holds that Truth wherein he agrees with you far more diſtinctly and firmely; ſo that when you have manifeſted unto him that thoſe Opinions contradict one anòther, he will rather Renounce and Condemn (for no man can hold what he ſees a Contradiction) that Erroneous Opinion, than that Tenent wherein he agrees with you, and therefore he holds as you judge the Truth oppoſite to the Errour more firmly and practically.

If any ſhould ask me, Which Extream is moſt dangerous? I ſhall only anſwer, there have been many have conſtantly held this middle way for Subſtance, yea, the moſt have done ſo virtually; and they of them in extreams were in moſt danger that did leaſt contradict themſelves.

And if ſuch an Incompetent judge as I, may ſpeak without offence (and why may I not, you ſuffer Fools gladly, your ſelves being wiſe) I would commend both, and blame both. I commend their Zeal in general on the one hand, for maintaining *Gods* Love to the World, and his willing the Salvation of all Men, on condition they would turn to him. And though I blame their denying ſpecial Grace, yet I am confident the main Reaſon of their denial was, becauſe they were ſure there was ſuch general Grace, and none could Preach without holding it in ſenſe; and they could not

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ſee it conſiſtent with ſpecial: and their Oppoſition to this ſpecial Grace was not through any ill will to it, had they thought it conſiſtent with general.

So I commend the Zeal in the other, in maintaining ſpecial Grace, but I blame their denying the general Grace. But yet am confident the main Reaſon of their denial was, becauſe they were ſure there was ſpecial Grace; and none could Pray without holding it in ſenſe, while they deny it in words; and they could not ſee it conſiſtent with the general Grace; and their Oppoſitions to this general Grace was not through any ill will to it, had they thought it conſiſtent with ſpecial.

But Sirs, are theſe ſo inconſiſtent, that you muſt either deny one or the other? For *God* to be ſo far willing of the Salvation of all, as to be willing to receive them on a condition, they have ſo far power enough to perform, that nothing hinders their performances but their own wilfulneſs; And to be ſo much further willing of the Salvation of ſome, as to reſolve to uſe effectual means to cauſe ſuch to perform it eventually? Is not the Scripture clear for both? And if we muſt meaſure Him by our ſelves, is it ſuch a difficulty that none can underſtand? for one to be really willing to entertain ſuch a one to be his Servant, if he will upon ſuch ſufficient offers and perſwaſions;

and

and yet reſolve he will go no further; and to be ſo willing to have another his Servant, that he is reſolved to uſe all means to compaſs it. Suppoſe we cannot underſtand theſe things, may we deny in Divinity whatſoever we cannot underſtand conſiſtent, as the Trinity in Unity. It is apparent, that many things that were inextricable Difficulties in former, have in after Ages been made well Intelligible by Studious Men. How know you but had half that Pains, that Learned men have lately taken in oppoſing, been ſpent in reconciling the diſtant Opinions about Grace and Free-will; That might ere this have been done more ſatisfactorily which I have here weakly endeavoured, and done but too unſatisfactorily to my ſelf.

USE 2d.

OWn, and thankfully acknowledge *God* and his good Spirit in every good Work, in things you are ſure were done by your own Free-will, as all ſuch are; yea, though you know not how to anſwer the Objections you can frame againſt this thankfulneſs. Have you believed, complied with the Goſpel? To you was the Arme of the Lord revealed; to you it was given

given to believe. Are you made of his willing people, it was done in a day of his Power. Therefore ſay not, How am I to be commended? But ſay with *David*, 1 Chro. 29. 14. *Who am I, that I ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly? for all things come of thee.* Who made thee to differ? Why made he thee to differ? and ſince you cannot anſwer this laſt queſtion, Adore ſpecial Grace. Can you ſay, you muſt follow him, and cannot let him go; and that you have, in the ſenſe explained, a Moral *cannot Sin* and draw back? This is not from Self, and Nature; No, the Moral *cannot do Good* is from that. O ſay, *God* hath caſt his Mantle over me, though I cannot tell what he hath done, or how, yet *God* knows what, and ſomething he hath done; ſay, The Finger of *God* is here. It is *God* hath made ſuch Iron to ſwim; the Father hath drawn. How opened he thine eyes? I cannot tell; but this I can tell, whereas I was born Blind, and Deaf, and Lame, now I ſee, and Walk, and hear.

Haſt thou this day done ſome Good, avoided ſome Evil, overcome ſome Temptation? Say not (though true in a right ſenſe) as *Deborah* once did, O my Soul, *Thou haſt troden down ſtrength*; but ſay with them, *This day we perceive the Lord hath been amongſt us, in that we have been with-held from this Sin.*

I live, yet not I, *but Chriſt in me*, Gal. 2. 10. *laboured more abundantly than all, yet not I, but the Grace of Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 15. 10. Have you laboured abundantly? it was from an abundance of Grace.

If a good Thought ariſe in your mind, a good Deſire in your heart, take notice whence it is, and be thankful, he worketh to will and do. *The Preparations of the Heart in man, and the anſwer of the Tongue is from the Lord*, Prov. 16. 1. Cry *grace, grace*, at the ſetting of the firſt Stone, at the firſt Springings and Offers towards good; and at every degree of Progreſs, ſet up your Stone, and ſay, Hitherto the Lord hath helped us. *Thou haſt wrought all our Works in us, and for us*, Iſaiah 26. 12.

USE, 3d.

BE deeply apprehenſive of your need of help; cry for the Spirit's help in every thing. He that hath begun the good Work muſt finiſh it, or it will never be finiſhed. When you have with *David* praiſed him for what is paſt, that you ſhould offer ſo willingly, and with a perfect Heart, then pray, 1 *Chron.* 29. 18. *Keep this for ever in the Imagination of the Thoughts of the Hearts of thy People*,

People, and prepare (or eſtabliſh and confirm) *their hearts unto thee.* When you cleave to the Lord with full purpoſe of Heart, with full Reſolution, go unto *God* to ſatisfie ſuch Reſolutions; go to him and ſay, the Lord *God* ſay Amen to them. Take heed of leaning to your own ſtrength, do not think you can do with ſome little courteſie of the Spirit, with ſome little of the Divine Tractation. We are mutable Creatures, change with every Wind of Temptation, it may be reſolved to day, and ſtaggering to morrow. Oh our Levity, Ficklenes, Oh the Rebellion of the Law of our Members! put no Confidence in your ſelves: Every man is a Lyer. Be not high minded but fear, *We are not ſufficient of our ſelves to think any thing as of our ſelves, but our ſufficiency is of God,* 2 Cor. 3. 5. It is by his Power we are kept through Faith to Salvation; and we can only be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might. Not only our firſt drawing is from *God* unto *God* through Chriſt, but the keeping us when drawn; elſe we ſhould draw back unto Perdition: For we are prone to it. Our goodneſs is as the Morning Cloud, and early Dew which ſoon goes away. Say, draw O Father, we cannot come except the Father draw; ſay while you live, Draw us and we will run after thee; draw, and we will run with it. Say not, Draw, and we will be idle and ſit

still. Say not, *God worketh to will and to do*, therefore we will be idle. You have not so learned Christ, but contrary, *Phil.* 2. 12, 13. *Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling: For it is God worketh in you, to will and to do, of his good pleasure*; that is, Forsake not him; fear to refuse to co-operate with him, lest he forsake you in respect of those Assistances, that come from his free undeserved Will and Pleasure.

USE, 4th.

HOw ill do they that place the Gospel-condition, (the thing that must be done or we undone,) in something that a man may say, He cannot do if he would never so fain. As in Assurance, or, Believing a man sins are pardoned; or, That he shall be saved. Man hath a Natural Impotency to this, till *God* have so revealed it by some Prophet or Revelation; or some way that he may know in particular, that his sins are pardoned: And therefore it cannot fall, till then, under command. Suppose there had been such a Promise as this (which I abhor almost to mention): If any man shall believe his Sins are pardoned, they are or they shall be pardoned, otherwise not; no man could yet believe it. A man might Lye, and say

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I believe it, but it is impossible he should upon this promise: for there must essentially be some way to notifie unto him that his sins are pardoned before he believe it. This would have been to have set life before us upon an impossible condition. If a Master should tell his Servant, There is a sum of money in one room of his house, but will not first tell him what room it is in, but bids him believe it is in any particular room, and he shall have it: The Servant may possibly Lye to get the Money, and say he believes it is in such a Chamber, but it is impossible he should Believe it. And if his Master should beat him because he believes it not to be in some particular room, it would be for no fault: for he cannot do it, till his Master, or some credible person tells him first, it is in such a room. A man must see he hath performed the Gospel-condition, before he may or can, without irrational presumption, account or esteem his sins pardoned.

And so also Relyance. Many a sincere Christian can say, I would rely on Christ to save me, but cannot; or, which is the same, I would cast off my fears, but cannot. Without doubt men will not cry out hereafter, *Why did not I believe my sins were pardoned? Why did not I rely on Christ to save me? for God no where commanded these things immediately; these are not the Condemning*

sins. But *bring out those mine Enemies that would not have me to rule over them,* Luk. 19. 14. 17. And the complaint will be, *Why would I not have this man to rule over me?* and *why would I not yield and submit to the Gospel-conditions?* Something it must be that men are Condemned for, that they could but would not do.

But it would be a contradiction for any to say, I would with the prevailing choice, have Christ for my Lord and Saviour, and would not with the prevailing choice.

USE 5th.

HOw comfortable is this to people of upright hearts, that nothing is required of you but what you can do, if there be a willing mind: They are sometimes troubled they do not the things they cannot do, if they would never so much, and they may be so; but they may not be troubled as if they offended God by this defect, but as at an affliction for their sins. All the people of God are troubled at their unwillingness, and that they do not so much as they could, had they but Will. If this be your greatest trouble, it argueth your willingness to be greater than your unwillingness; and so you need not be troubled with

with desponding trouble; but go on mourning over this remainder of unwillingness with tears of hope.

What advantage may we take here, to comfort troubled ones, and to help them to keep up good thoughts of God! Many of them, through misapprehensions, are apt to think him a hard Master, expecting to reap where he hath not sown, whereas it is not so. Many of them have such strong and sensible affections and inclinations to Good, that even their own Souls do bear that record of themselves, which the Apostle bare concerning others, that they are willing, even beyond their power, 2 *Cor.* 8. 5 and yet are afraid God will not accept of them in doing what they can; and so are greatly perplexed, because it may be they have not such tears, or such freedom from distractions as they desire and expect. But as *Abraham* said, *If she will not come, thou shalt be clear from this thy oath*: So if tears and passions, and other such things will not come, and that not from any want of your own will; you are clear in this particular.

If any should say, *I am willing with all my heart to obey God in every thing.* But this is a small matter.

I know, it is a small matter in some sense; but it is no small matter in Gods acceptance; and this is no small matter, if you

ſpeak of the original of it; It is a thing of high and noble diſcent, if you had rather have a good heart than a great Eſtate. The finger of God is here, The Father hath drawn. You have better thoughts than you would have, or than you ought to have of corrupt Nature, if you think this fruit grew on that Tree. Corrupt Nature, ſaith with them, *As for the words which thou haſt ſpoken, we will not hearken.* They are Gods Servants *who ſo deſire to fear his Name*, Nehem. 1. 11. *We ſhould praiſe God, and ſay, Who are we, that we ſhould be ſo willing?*

Obj. *I am willing, but I can do nothing, I do what I can in ſome weak meaſure, and would have it better, but my duties are blind and lame, and torne; I have done God much diſ-ſervice, but can now do him no ſervice worth calling Service.*

Anſ. What ever thy ſins have been, and let thy ſervices be never ſo weak, thy weakneſs never ſo great, be thou never ſo unfit for thy Maſters uſe and Service, though thou ſhould'ſt be able ſcarce to ſpeak a wiſe word for him, or to him; yet, if thou doeſt what thou can'ſt, and deſireſt it was better, and endeavoureſt to encreaſe, this is enough for acceptance, as long as thou art thus willing.

If a willing mind, he accepteth what thou haſt, and doth not require what thou haſt

not

not. We read of a Master, it's like some Captain or Officer, leaving his Servant a Souldier because unfit for Service, *because he was weak and sick*: But the Captain of our Salvation is gracious; if we be so feeble as to be unable to wield our weapon, or follow him, yet if we follow him as we are able, and resolve in his strength to do what we can, and never to turn Renegadoes, Turn-coats; this sheweth we are true to our Captain, and he will not leave us and forsake us, we shall receive pay. * *Deus non respicit quantum homo valet; sed quantum velit.* God looketh not on the quantity or outward extension, but on the quality & inward affection. The desire of a man (saith *Solomon*) *is his kindness*, not the weight or worth of the gift. *The Widdow's Mite* was accepted, being her *All* in upright desire, the reason she cast in no more, was for not want of Will, but ability; because she had no more. Yet it may be a question, whether all simply, or all that was not just necessary for her sustenance; but it is most likely all simply, and then it might possibly be her failing, and against the duty of care of her self; and though there might be such imprudence, yet God taketh no notice of it, being in the integrity of her heart. As if a man should lose opportunities from worldly advantages imprudently, through love to God to attend his Service, God

1 Sam 30. 13

Greg. Moral. Lib. 12.

would accept it while it was in the Integrity of his heart, according to the beſt of his knowledge.

Do but endeavour to Love and Eſteem Chriſt more, and admire Free-grace more, and never fear your natural Weakneſſes as oppoſed to Moral. It is not the outward quality of the Perſon, or outward Excellency of the duty commends us to *God* but the Heart. You need not envy others Abilities; ſerve *God* in your places according to your Abilities. Miniſters of weak Abilities and Parts, are as acceptable to *God*, while there are competent miniſterial Abilities; yea, more acceptable, when there is more of Deſire and Endeavour to do good, than Miniſters of greater Abilities; and often more ſucceſsful. Greater Abilities are apt to puff men up; it is hard to give much, and not let the left hand know what the right hand doth. So, hard to be extraordinary in any Duty, and keep humble. Let Devils and Wicked men ſcoff at Weak, but Willing Miniſters; and ſay, (What will theſe feeble People do?) as they did, theſe are but poor Builders. But we Read, *The Wall was built for they had a mind to work*, or a heart to work, *Nehe.* 4.6. So ſuch as have a heart to build, may build ſo as to reach Heaven themſelves, and build up others for it. *God* will ſay as *Jehu* to *Jonadab*, *If thy heart be as my heart, then come into my Chariot* of Glory. Yet

Yet when I ſay *God* requires the Heart and Will, I do not ſay only but principally, and yet ſo only that if a man could do no more it would be accepted. If he have the Heart, all other things required follow proportionably ordinarily, and if they do not, it will be excuſable: For then the defect is a *cannot*. If the Heart lead, all that have no Impediment follow. All the Members, and Powers, and Faculties in a man, ſay to the Heart and Will, as the People to *Joſhuah*, Cap. 1. v. 16. *All that thou commandeſt us, we will do, and whither ſoever thou ſendeſt us we will go, only the Lord be with thee.*

USE, 6th.

HOw encouraging is this to all to come to *God*, to return. We Miniſters in Chriſt's name, and Chriſt by us require nothing of you, but what you can do, was there but a willing mind. If there be any thing you cannot do, which ſome others can, we will tell you, you need not at preſent, and yet ſhall be accepted, and *God* will in time upon doing what you are able, enable you to do more. Say not in thy heart, *Who ſhall aſcend into Heaven? that is, to bring Chriſt down from above*; or, *Who ſhall*

ſhall deſcend into the deep? That is, to bring up Chriſt again from the dead; But what ſaith the Goſpel, the word of Faith? The Word is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart, Rom. 10. 6, 7, 8. That is, Be not perplexed, as if ſome difficult impoſſible thing was required of thee now to Salvation, that thou canſt not perform if willing; this is to deny Chriſt's Death and Aſcenſion. What did he dye for, if ſome impoſſible thing be required of us notwithſtanding his Death? Men will entertain none, nor give wages to any, but to thoſe that can do much, to thoſe fit for their ſervice. When to hire a Servant, a Maſter asks, What canſt thou do? If a Servant ſhould anſwer, I can do nothing, I have no Skill or Ability, I have not been uſed to work; but I am willing, I will do what I can: Who would entertain ſuch a Servant? But if any ſhould ſay thus, and that heartily to *God*, I am very unfit for any good Work, I have not been uſed to do any Good, but I will now do what I can; if I fail, it ſhall be my greateſt grief, and againſt my will. *God* will accept it; this is all that he requires to obtain the great Wages. Oh Riches of Grace! *Is this the manner of man, O Lord?* 2 Sam. 7. 19.

The laſt Invitation to Sinners in Scripture is this, *Whoſoever will, let him come, and take of the Water of Life freely*; Which virtually

virtuallycomprehends, that, He that hath no money come, that hath nothing of any worth or value.

If the Prophet had required ſome great thing, Would'ſt thou not have done it? We have not any thing to do for Satisfaction of *Gods* Wrath and Juſtice; yea, nothing but what you can with eaſe and delight do, was there but a willing mind. Say but, and be hearty in it, *Wherein I have done Iniquity, I will do ſo no more. I will*, this is the voyce of true Repentance; *With the Heart* and Will *man believeth* and Repenteth.

Why ſtand you here all the day Idle? You cannot reply, You have no ſtrength, ability, do but what you can, and it will be accepted; You will not tell me, however you dare not *tell God*; You have no mind, no Will to work: Though this is it, if you do not what you can. You cannot ſay, None hath hired us, we had as good ſit idle, as work idle, as work without receiving Wages. *I am ſent to hire you this day, to aſſure you of Wages, You ſhall have your Penny though you come in late.*

Let none excuſe themſelves from Duty by the meanneſs of themſelves and Duties. Art thou ſenſible thou art good for nothing? yet give thy ſelf up to him, thou ſhalt be accepted. Is thy Gift mean, yet offer it: *They that had but little, offered little*

to

to the Tabernacle, and yet were accepted. Some it may be have this Temptation; What ſhould I pray for others for? It's too much for me to be accepted for my ſelf. Yet, ſin not in ceaſing to pray for others, *God* will hear thy Prayers ſooner it may be, than theirs that have better thoughts of their Prayers. *Give that little when thou haſt but little to give.* Weak Abilities you ſee do not exempt you from *Gods* ſervice, becauſe not from his Acceptance.

Will *God* accept of what you have, if there be a willind mind, and ſhall a willing mind be wanting? Will he accept of the Heart and Will, and ſhall he not have it? *God* will excuſe the want of any thing elſe, but will by no means excuſe your want of Heart and Will: For all other Powers in a man may be ſuſpended from doing their Offices, but only the Will. But this cannot be ſuſpended ſo as to excuſe while a man hath any uſe of his Reaſon; Therefore *God* will excuſe all other Defects. *The Blind cannot ſerve God with his Eyes, or Dumb with his Tongue, or Deaf with his Ears; yet ſuch are accepted of God, while he hath their Hearts.*

USE,

USE, 7th.

HOw humbling may this Doctrine of mans Ability and Power (in this right ſenſe) to good, be to us; Yea how neceſſary is it to a right Humiliation? And how influential to make the World guilty before *God*, that we and they could have done otherwiſe, not only in *Adam* (as ſome weakly ſpeak) but when we ſinned? Do not ſay, This diſcourſe lifteth a man up. Thou makeſt ill uſe of it, if it have ſuch an effect on thee; if is to glory in your greateſt ſhame, it is like being ſet on fire, with having Water poured on thee. No Doctrine can poſſibly tend more to the debaſing and humbling of men. This ſhould abaſe us in our own eyes, and ſtaine our pride; for it demoliſhes, and even pollutes all our Sanctuaries of Refuge. Many are apt to ſay, Alas, What can we do? What can poor fallen Creatures do? Do you blame us? Our Diſability is only true, in a ſenſe wherein it may lay load on us; and in that ſenſe wherein we are aſhamed to own it; but not in the ſenſe wherein it may excuſe.

If any ſhould ſay, This Doctrine taketh off too many things from being ſins: Methinks others might anſwer for me, that if the man be in an Errour that way, yet he ſeemeth to recompenſe it, by laying greater

ter load then ordinary on thoſe, which all agree to be ſin.

We are wonderful prone to fly to excuſes ever ſince *Adam* and *Eve* did ſo before us; yea, and to ſuch excuſes as would lay the fault ultimatly on God: but this layeth us naked to our ſhame.

But if any will ſay, It is not from wicked willfulneſs that they continue in their ſins, let this try. I call you this day, ſaying with *Jeremiah*, *Jer* 18. 12. *Return every man from his evil wayes, and make your ways and your doings good.* Now what will you Anſwer? Either you muſt anſwer, we will with all our hearts do what we can, and then God will accept you, if real, in this; or you will anſwer, as they in the following verſe, *We will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do after the imagination of his evil hearts*; or as they anſwered ſuch a call, *Jer.* 44. 16, 17. *As for the word which thou haſt ſpoken unto us, in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee: But we will certainly do whatſoever thing goeth out of our own mouth*, &c. You ſee you have no colour to pretend it is from a weakneſs, diſtinct from voluntary wickedneſs. And if you will yet go on in your neglect of God and his ways, whereas Chriſt ſaid; *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do*, I might be provoked to ſay, Father forgive them

them not, they know what they do. But God forbid I ſhould ſo ſay; God was wrath with *Moſes* for ſpeaking unadviſedly with his lips, when he ſaid, *O ye Rebels!*

You that have a deſire to fear God's Name, and in the main are a willing people, did you think it was from want of will to do otherwiſe, when you committed any known ſin, or omitted any known duty? Did you think you had ſo much wilfulneſs left, and ſo little Will to thoſe things you have a Will to, and complain of the neglect of? and ſo much Will to thoſe things you complain of the doing of? When you complain of ſinful weakneſſes, are you not apt to think of them in ſuch expreſſions as Natural weakneſs, and not as being in part wilful wickedneſſes, though they are ſo far as formally ſinful?

Some have ſaid (but I think it not univerſally true) that *Omne voluntarium eſt involuntarium*, that every voluntary act is in part involuntary. But we may ſay it of almoſt all, if not of every of the duties we perform; Cry out, oh our wilfulneſs to evil! Oh our wickedneſs! Oh our unwillingneſs to good! Thoſe things we have a Will to, we have but little Will to. How many duties do we perform with a half-heart, and with a ſinful indifferency? who counts it their meat and drink to do the Fathers Will? Chriſt went more willingly to

ſuffer

ſuffer for us, than we to do any thing for him. When we are doing God's Will, how ſeldome can we ſay, We delight to do thy Will? we go forward it may be, and dare not turn back, but how often like *Lot's* Wife do we look back? we go forward like thoſe Kine that carried the Ark, lowing as they went; we do, and ſuffer for God, murmuring, repining, *dicis gratiâ* as the phraſe is.

If any ſhall reply, You ſeemed to grant that a man caſting his goods over-board to ſave his life in a Tempeſt, cannot but do it in part unwillingly. *No man can with his whole will* (ſaith *Ariſtotle*) *thus caſt away his Eſtate.*

I Anſwer; I grant it is ſo in ſuch a caſe, becauſe the man in that caſe is to be a great loſer, and to have no reparation. But ſuppoſe the Merchant had been required to caſt away his goods to ſave his own life, by a Prince that had given him thoſe goods, and all he had beſide; And one able and willing, and faithfully promiſing to make up that loſs; yea, promiſing that if he caſt them away, he ſhould be recompenced an hundred fold; would it not then be ſtrangely irrational to caſt away his Merchandize, murmuring, and with ſuch an half Will? Was your obedience and ſelf-denyal required by one that had never done much for you, and was there to be

no

no reward of your ſelf-denyal, I could not tell how to anſwer you in ſaying, How ſhould we but deny our worldly and fleſhly intereſt, very unwillingly? But when God hath done, and Chriſt done and ſuffered, ſo great things for you, and made ſuch promiſes; then to do duties repining, and like that Paſſenger in the ſtorm that *Eraſmus* repreſents, who caſt away his goods *multa mala precans & Superis & Inferis*, What a ſhame is it? We ſhould ſay as the people, when they offered ſo willingly, *Of thine own have we given thee, for all things come of thee*; and ſhould ſuffer with joy the ſpoyling of our goods, knowing we have in Heaven a more enduring ſubſtance, and rejoyce we are counted worthy to ſuffer for his Name. But, Did not *Abraham* go more willingly to offer up his Son, than we our ſin? He aroſe early in the morning to go about it, we put off.

I grant, In the ſenſe I have before explained, a good man would do more good and cannot. But yet this is a great truth, and is to be the great charge againſt your ſelves, That you can do more good than you do, and will not; You can avoid more evil than you do, and will not.

Friends, though God will pardon you while there is a willing mind in the main, notwithſtanding your great unwillingneſs, while your willingneſs is the prevailing,

countenanced bent of your Soul; yet you muſt not pardon your ſelves. Pardon not your ſelves in this unwillingneſs, as you would have God pardon you.

USE, 8:h.

HOw convincing is this diſcourſe to wicked men! how may we hence urge Impenitent Sinners till they be aſhamed!

Sirs, Will you not this day give up your ſelves to the obedience of Faith? why will you not? There is all the reaſon in the world you ſhould be willing to comply with the Goſpel. He made us of nothing, Redeemed us when worſe than nothing; hath made and continued us yet rational Creatures with freedom of Will, in the ſenſe explained; we have yet a mind to know, and ability to chuſe the Good, and refuſe the Evil; and *God* hath made preparations of Heaven for us, and offers it to us on reaſonable and eaſie terms, and hath ſet Life and Death before us; So that nothing can undo you but your wilful Refuſal, as the Scripture every where teſtifieth. Jer. 13. 17. *If you will not hear, my Soul ſhall weep in ſecret*, &c. He doth not ſay, if you *cannot*, nor Scripture ſay any where, men *cannot*; in a ſenſe different from a *will-not*. verſ. 27. *O Jeruſalem, Wilt thou not be*

be made clean? When shall it once be? Mat. 23.31. *How often would I have gathered you, and you would not?* Isa. 1.5. *Why should you be stricken any more, you will revolt more and more?* Prov. 5. 20. *Why wilt thou my Son,* &c? Prov. 1.29. *They hated knowledg, and did not choose the fear of the Lord, they would none of my Counsel, and despised all my Reproofs.* Ezek. 3. 7. *But the House of Israel will not hearken to thee, for they will not hearken to me; for all the House of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.*

Let me plead with you from that Scripture, *Isa.* 5. 3. *And now, O Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge I pray you between me and my Vineyard.* vers. 4. *What could I have done more to my Vineyard?* These Words are not well Translated, for in the *Hebrew* it is מה לעשות עוד *Quid faciendum adhuc?* What was there yet to do? What was there more to be done? Implying, they could plead nothing wanting on *Gods* part, that he ought to have done, they themselves being appealed to as judges. *Quid est quod debui ultrà facere.* So the *Syriack*, *Arabick*, and almost all Translations; I find no Translation akin to ours. The words in the Original are the same, 2 *Kings* 4 13 16 *What should be done for her?* And Hester 6.6. *What should be done to the man whom the King delights to honour?* Not, *What could be done?* Yet our

Tranſlation hath afforded occaſion to ſome Learned Men of our own, to affirm with ſome colour from hence, that *God* doth as much as he can with fitneſs or Juſtice for every one; whereas, had it been well Tranſlated, it had altogether diſowned ſuch an Inference.

Theſe Words are *Gods* appeal to men about his Juſtice, What ſhould I have done more? What have I not done, that lay on me to do, to prevent your Ruine? Wherein have I been wanting to you? How came this about, *That when I looked for Grapes, it brought forth wild Grapes?* Was there any reaſon for it, that you can ſtand to? Have not I done enough, ſo as you muſt ſay, Your Deſtruction lies on your ſelves, and not on me?

He calls the men of *Judah* and Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem* to judge between him and his Vineyard; and, by his Vineyard, means the ſame Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem*. So that *God* here appeals to the Men themſelves againſt themſelves, which he would not do, if he did not know that he had a Compurgator within them, that their Conſciences muſt teſtifie for him againſt themſelves, that they had all things naturally neceſſary.

Now, you I am ſpeaking to, judge you. You are it may be apt to ſay, If *God* had done his part, I had done mine. *God* hath done his part, ſo as there was nothing want-

ing

ting at first to keep *Adam* from falling, that he ought to have done.

But to let this go, and to take things now as they are in this degenerate condition, and Hope brought-in a second time; there is nothing now wanting on His part, that you may lay your second Perishing on him, and not on your selves.

Many are apt to think or say, We will justifie *God* because we fell in *Adam*, but take things as they now are, and he hath not done enough; things are not brought a second time to our choice, else we and others had not so gone on in our sins, and therefore, if we do ill, let him blame himself and not us.

Do not now fly to other Countries, or such as cannot understand what is spoken, I could speak something of them; But my business is to you that hear, and can understand what I say. And I shall shew you that he hath so done enough for you, that if he had done less for you by many parts, or not waited so long; yet you could lay your Perishing no-where but on your selves. *God* hath done a great deal more than he needed for you, to make you inexcusable in perishing the second time.

Now bring forth your strong Reasons, What should he have done more? *What Iniquity have you found in him?* Jer. 2. 5. And if I can easily answer you, how easi-

ly can *God* and your own Conſciences?

Obj. 1. *If you ſhall ſay, There is ſomething beſides wilful refuſal in mens periſhing: For this ſecond periſhing cannot be laid on many that periſh, for Chriſt never dyed for them.*

Anſw. If this was ſo, I confeſs neither I nor any elſe could anſwer you. But Chriſt hath ſo far Dyed for you, as by his Death to obtain this, *That if any man turn he ſhall live*; and this Law of Grace is made in his blood. *He is able to ſave to the uttermoſt them that come to God by him*, Heb. 7. 25. No man ſhall ever be Condemned becauſe no price was paid for him; but only for refuſing that which was purchaſed for him, on the Terms whereon it was offered. The Scripture no where layeth the periſhing of Sinners, on the want of a Price paid for them; but every where on their refuſal: *You will not come to Me that you might have Life.* Theſe Words imply that there is Life enough in Chriſt for you; and if you miſs of it, it is becauſe you will not have it. If Chriſt had ſo left out any, that he had not purchaſed, *That if they believe they ſhall be ſaved*; then you might charge Miniſters with Falſhood, as well as you might if they ſhould Preach, If the Devils ſhould repent and believe they ſhould be ſaved, whom Chriſt never purchaſed this for.

Would

Would Chriſt bid his Miniſters Preach the Goſpel to every Creature, *He that Believeth ſhall be ſaved*, &c. if it was not true? Would he bid them make ſuch Offers, and invite ſuch multitudes of Gueſts, if he was not ſure there was Proviſion enough for them all? Elſe this ſhould excuſe, and they might ſay, If we periſh this ſecond time for want of a Saviour, it is no fault of ours; this would be their Miſery and Calamity, but not through their refuſal of Mercy that they periſhed. You might elſe ſay at leaſt, There is ſome other Reaſon why men fall ſhort of Happineſs, and not only becauſe of their unbelief; Nay, their unbelief would be no reaſon at all of this Periſhing: The not taking Phyſick was no reaſon at all of a mans dying at ſuch a time, if it would not have ſaved his Life if he had taken it, no more than his taking any thing elſe, that is acknowledged to have no tendency to his Health. And it is in vain to ſay, For any thing, they knew they might have been ſaved; or, They and others thought in the judgment of Charity, (as ſome ſpeak) that if they had believed, they might have been ſaved: for this is nothing, if the Truth was otherwiſe; and at laſt in Hell they will know the Truth was otherwiſe, and then not befool themſelves for not doing it.

Suppose a man thought a Pilgrimage to *Jerusalem* would have saved him, and others thought so too, but in truth it would not; Can you say, if he did not go, he perished because he went not that Pilgrimage? And will he befool himself when he understands it was to no purpose to have gone? If a man could perswade them in Hell, Christ never Dyed for them, never purchased for them, that, If they had turned they should have liv'd; he would take off a great part of their anguish by perswading them not to befool themselves for refusing Grace and Mercy. The Rich man in Hell is represented by that Expression, *Send Lazarus to my Brethren*, as one that thought that men on Earth, that are in danger of going thither, and that will do so, if they go on, may prevent their coming thither. And when *Abraham* answers, *They have Moses and the Prophets*, it implyeth his thoughts, that men have all things necessary, and nothing is wanting towards their Salvation but themselves.

This of Christ's dying for all so far, is so apparently proved by Scripture, by almost any that have attempted it, that could any of ordinary abilities obtain of themselves to read such, they might easily be satisfied: So that I think I may say, He that is ignorant of this, let him be ignorant still for me.

The

The only colourable Objection (that is not virtually anſwered in what I have ſaid) that I can call to mind, is only from *John* 17. 9. *I pray for them, I pray not for the world*; Therefore ſurely (ſay ſome) he would not ſhed his blood for the world, for whom he would not pray. But would any be at pains to read that Chapter, he may ſee that Chriſt ſpeaketh of himſelf, what he did in that particular prayer at that time: And that particular prayer to *verſe* 20. was only for the Apoſtles; or at moſt for them that were then actually Believers. And *verſe* 20. he prayeth for them that ſhould afterward believe through their word; and ſo all that he prayed for there were actually Believers, or looked on as ſuch; and the ſubſtance of the petitions there can agree to none elſe, as keeping them in truth and unity, *&c.* and there is not one word in that prayer for God to cauſe any to believe: ſo that we may as well argue he never prayed for the Converſion of any, becauſe he did not in that prayer, and ſo never ſhed his blood for the Converſion of any. But can any think that Chriſt that wept over *Jeruſalem* never prayed for it; or that there were none but Elect that Crucified him, when he prayed for his Crucifiers. May we not with greater reaſon argue contrary thus, Surely he did at other times, though not in this particular prayer, *pray for the world*

world, since he shed his blood for it. All other objections are reduceable to this common one, That it would be no kindness to dye so as to purchase for any, but the Elect that actually would believe, *That if they believe, & turn, they shall live*; because none else have the Natural power to turn, to perform the condition, but they that he actually causes to turn, and so it would be but to mock them. *Ans.* I grant if this was true, it would be but to mock, as to say to a Lame man, If thou wilt run, I will give, (let his lameness come which way it will); but you see men have the Natural power to perform the condition; and though they will fall short of the benefit through their wickedness, it doth not follow it was no kindness: and cannot any one see, it would as much follow according to your way, that, it would be no justice in God to punish men for not performing the Gospel-condition.

2. Obj. *Some may say, But there is something beside Will in it; for Natural men cannot understand the Gospel, and Scriptures, and Will of God; Carnal men cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

Answ. Not to trouble you with an interpretation that some make very probably the meaning of one of these places.

First; The utmost that can be pretended

ed to be drawn from these and such Scriptures, is; Either that they could not know such things by their reason, except they had been revealed to them by the Scripture; or that Natural men do not love or approve and savour the things of God.

Secondly; If it was so that men Could not understand his Will, this would excuse, and God would never require such to know and obey his Will. As for example, If the Scriptures were written in such a Language as you could not understand, and none that could would translate or interpret them to you; or if there be one that is a Fool, and hath not the Natural power to understand what is obvious in them; or if you had the competent use of Reason, but the Scriptures were written so obscurely, that you could not with your greatest endeavour understand them. I do believe there are some things so obscure in Scripture, that no man can understand them. Now though it be desirable to understand such things, yet I do not think it a mans fault he doth not, and so not his duty: But only so far his ignorance of them is sinful, as it cometh for want of Will, and so of Industry. Nay further, I do not think that every man is bound to bestow that great pains whereby he might understand those difficult passages, which yet he might understand with great pains:

but

but only so much (supposing he have a competent knowledg of what is necessary) as is well consistent with his other duties.

Thirdly, The Scriptures are plain in the great things necessary, and have been made so plain to you, that either you do or might have understood them. One once said to a Lady that was maintaining the Scriptures were to be neglected, because difficult to be understood; Madam, What can be plainer then this, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery?* They are so plain that young People may understand them in things necessary. *Timothy* understood the Scriptures from a Child. *A Young man may cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to this Word.* They are written to give to the Simple, and young man Knowledge and understanding. There is none of you here but it is likely you know so much already, as would you be faithful to that little, and endeavour after more, *God* would accept you.

Let me ask every of you, Do you not intend to Repent hereafter, and turn to *God*, and Christ? If not, thou art a more wicked Wretch than ordinary; if thou do, thou confessest by that, that thou knowest what is the main required of thee; and yet art so in wicked thou wilt not yield.

Fourthly, Are you not *willingly ignorant of* such things? Like those 2 *Pet.* 3. 5. Such as

as do not like to retain *God* in your knowledge? such Fools as hate Knowledge and Instruction? Such as say, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledg of thy ways.* Such as those *Psal.* 82. 5. *Who know not, neither will understand.* *God* offers you the help of his Spirit, and Ministers, but you refuse. Your Ignorance so far as it partakes of Will is formally Sinful, so far as you do not enough dislike it.

Fifthly, But are you indeed ignorant and cannot Read? I will not say it is your Duty this day to Read, because you cannot: But it is to be lamented as a Fruit of sin that you cannot, if you had opportunities to Learn, and lose them carelesly. Yet it is thy duty to Learn to Read; if it be probably attainable by thee, by the help thou canst get in the Circumstances wherein thou art. But suppose it not probably attainable by thee, so that a prudent man would think it not thy Duty to endeavour it. Get others to Read to thee, and use such means as a man would use that hath a willing mind to Learn, and do his Master's Will; and be Faithful to the knowledge thou hast, and it will be accepted. How many have gotten a good Knowledge that could never Read? How many are now in Heaven that could never Read? Without doubt, the greatest part of them in Heaven could never Read; when we consider how few could Read in the

the Primitive times of Chriſtianity, yea, and till almoſt this Age.

Obj. 3 *But I cannot turn from ſin to God, I cannot leave my ſinful wayes.*

Anſw. If thou be one that ſpeaks this by way of Excuſe, as the moſt do that uſe this ſpeech, being one that goeſt on in thy ſins notwithſtanding rebukes; I dare confidently ſay, thou Lieſt, when thou ſaieſt I cannot in the propereſt ſenſe of the word, and in the ſenſe wherein it can by a rational man be brought to excuſe; that is, if thou mean any thing elſe by it, than I will not; Thou ſhouldeſt, ſay as the Truth is, I will not. If thou ſay, I cannot will it; either thou ſpeakeſt falſly, meaning I have not the Natural Faculty; or I can anſwer, The more wicked and inexcuſable Wretch thou! For thou meaneſt, I will not Will it, I chuſe I may not, I will not for all that *God* and Man can ſay to me, my Wickedneſs is ſo great. Would'ſt thou ſpeak plain, it would appear to thy ſelf and all the World to be no Excuſe, and this makes thee hide thy meaning in dark Words. Speak out plainly, and this is it, *I am reſolved to pleaſe my Fleſh and Senſes, come what will of it. I have ſuch a choſen Averſneſs to God and his Wayes, and ſuch a Love to the wayes of Sin, that though the Miniſter ſhould lift up his Voyce like a Trumpet, and ſpeak and ſound as terribly as the Trumpet will at the laſt day, I will go on.*

Obj.

Obj. 4. *But I really would leave ſome ſinful wayes and cannot, and would do better and cannot.*

I would ſpeak here warily. If thy meaning be only this, I would do ſuch things, and would have ſuch graces, if I could attain them without much Trouble and Self-denial and difficulty to my Fleſh; or I have ſome ſudden unconſtant deſire of ſuch things, ſometime ariſing from ſome ſudden Paſſion or extraordinary Occaſion; or I have ſome little velleity, ſome motions of the Will, but theſe come not to the countenanced prevailing Choyce and Reſolution: But, notwithſtanding all theſe, the prevailing bent of my Will, and that which I moſt chuſe, all things conſidered, is to go on and pleaſe my fleſh: If this be all thy meaning, I may ſay, So hath any, or almoſt any, Thief or Robber to leave his courſe of Life, and would do it, could he but tell how to live in ſuch, or ſome little leſs, competent Eaſe or Pleaſure, as he eſteems this courſe affords him without it, But ſince he cannot, his prevaling will is to follow on his courſe.

But if thy meaning be, It is the prevailing bent of my will; my darling choyce is the better part, ſo as that it is my greateſt grief that I fall ſhort. I had rather have a good Heart then the greateſt Eſtate. And though I be frequently guilty of many O-

miſſions

miſſions and Commiſſions (though not of very groſs ſins): Yet there is no ſin but fain I would overcome it, and no Duty but I would fain perform it; ſo that I have reſpect to all *Gods* Commandements: *God* will accept this. If one ſhould ſay, as I heard one that was much in that Duty once complain; *I would Pray, but the Words are taken out of my mouth:* If this ſhould be really ſo, that it do not proceed from want of will, *God* would accept it without words. But take heed of deceiving your ſelves: If there be a Will in the prevailing degree, the Deed will follow if there be Ability and Opportunity; elſe it is but that which we call Wiſhing and not Willing in the ordinary ſenſe. If thou art real, thou doſt perform the Chriſtian Duties in ſome weak meaſure, and lamenteſt thy performing them no better. A real prevailing Will is accompanied with Holy Endeavours, and earneſt ſtrivings in the uſe of means. Do not deceive your ſelves, *God* will not be mocked; He will try whether you be real or no. Say as *Jacob*, *My Father will feel me, therefore I will be careful I ſeem not to him as one that mocketh, leſt I bring on me a Curſe and not a Bleſſing.* I cannot contradict you if you ſay, I would, but cannot, of many things in this ſenſe: I can only ſay it is true in *Theſi*, if a prevailing willing mind be preſent, *God* will accept what-ever failings

ings there are beſides. I can only give you rules how to try whether this be the prevailing bent of your Soul or not: and would do it here more largely, but for ſwelling this Diſcourſe too much.

Obj. 5. *But there is ſomething elſe in it than my wilfulneſs; for God doth not give me grace to Repent, and turn from my ſins to God.*

If you mean he doth not give means enough naturally neceſſary to work this change, I have ſhewed you it is falſe: *God* giveth thee abundance of objective Grace through Chriſt, as, his Goſpel-Promiſes, Threatnings, and alſo many helps and motions to leave ſuch ways and turn, ſo that nothing is wanting but thy own will.

But if you mean, as you ſeem to do, that *God* doth not actually prevaile with you to leave your ſins, this is very true, if you do go on in your ſins. But may not every Thief and criminal Offender ſay the ſame, *God* did not give me grace to leave theſe courſes. But will this excuſe before any wiſe Judge?

Obj. 6. *But God could turn me if he would.*

It is very true. Any man that committeth any ſins may ſay, *God* could if he would

with his efficacious will, have hindred me from that sin. Yet we are sure, this doth not excuse; it was not therefore no Fault, no sin because he did not; else there could not possibly be any sin in the world. You see many going on in all Villany, *God* could turn them if he would, but do you think they are in no fault because he doth not? *God* hath wise Reasons and ends why he will not with some go any further, but sets bounds to his Will. You seem by such an Objection to wish, He would rule you as Bruits, in a natural way not consisting with Promises and Threats, with Rational and Moral government of rational Creatures.

Obj. 7. *Then he doth not will my Conversion and Salvation, or that I should abstain from such a sin, if he do not actually Convert me, or actually hinder me from such a sin, since he can.*

Ans. It doth not follow. It only follows, he sets such bounds to his will for wise ends, and will's it no further than is consistent with such bounds: he will through Compassion set Life and Death before you, and warn you by his Word and Ministers, and strive with you so far as to be a forehand with you; Hath no pleasure in your Sins and Death.

But your Conversion is amiable and desireable

able to him. He will be able to say of them that perish, I would and you would not; and can you rationally demand the Governour of the World should do any more, what-ever he may do arbitrarily to some.

Obj. 8. *But God doth give Grace to some as bad as I, and some way that I know not of makes them willing of unwilling.*

I grant he doth so. But suppose he did not, would'st thou then be inexcusable? How can this then alter the case? Would it excuse all the High-way men in the Land, if the King should some way extraordinary prevail with one or more, not to go on in such courses? What if he do more for some, while he doth enough and more than enough for thee, and is far before hand with thee? The *Pelagians* granted, that *God* did something extraordinary for the Conversion of the *Apostles, and some few others, in a way agreeable to their free Will and Humanity. Would it not have been a ridiculous attempt for any, to have gone about to have confuted them with this Argument. viz. *That none then are to blame in the World, that go on in their sins, that God did not this for.*

*As the Author *Hypognosticon* tels us: *Lib.* 6

Obj. 9. *But God will require no more than he gives.*

Anſ. If you mean that *God* will require no more of you than he gives you Ability and means to do, it's true. But if you mean, He will require no more than he giveth you actually, ſo as to cauſe you actually to do it, It is falſe; elſe, there would be no ſin in the World chargeable on men. He will require the uſe of his Talents, and this faithful Improvement, as with good reaſon he may. He hath given thee time, ſpace, and means to Repent; he hath given thee an Underſtanding and Will to know and chuſe the Good, and refuſe the Evil in the natural ſenſe. Thoſe *Iſraelites* fell ſhort of the good Land, becauſe of their Unbelief or Diſobedience; and yet it's ſaid in the Moral ſenſe, *God gave them not a Heart to Underſtand, and a Mind to ſee.*

Obj. 10. *Sure you will grant that no man can Repent, and Return, without that ſpecial Grace of God that actually cauſeth him thus to Repent and Turn.*

Anſ. I do and will grant it, provided you mean no more by it than this, That no man will return without that ſpecial Grace that actually prevails with him; elſe it is notoriouſly falſe. A Robber had the power or faculty of leaving his wayes, though *God* did not make him actually leave them.

Obj.

Obj. 11. *But I would have had him made me willing to part with my ſins, and turn to God, though I was unwilling.*

Anſw. This is falſe, yea a Contradiction. This is to ſay, you would have him do what you would not have him do for you (I mean, it is a Contradiction, taking, *willing*, in both clauſes, for the prevailing choice) and to ſay, You would have him do it againſt your will. While unwilling to part with your ſins, you loved Darkneſs, and would not be diſturbed with Light. You did not chuſe the fear of the Lord. You ſaid to the Almighty, *Depart from us, we deſire not the knowledg of thy wayes.* You loved to have it ſo, as it was with them, *Jer.* 5. 31. You ſaid, *Jeſus let us alone, torment us not*; and would not have this Man to rule over you. Their eyes have they cloſed, *leſt at any time they ſhould ſee with their eyes, and underſtand with their hearts, and be Converted.* Did you not make proviſion for the Fleſh to fulfill it in the Luſts thereof? And was this like one that would have his Luſts dye? Did you not ſeek occaſion to ſin, and to avoid Conviction and Reproofs? Did you not rather chuſe to part with your Soul than your ſins, when Life and Death were ſet before you on the Goſpel terms? Did you not ſay, If *God*

will not ſave me in ſuch wayes as are conſiſtent with my preſent eaſe and pleaſure, I will not be ſaved?

You would have had *him* ſave you *in* your ſins, but not *from* your ſins. It may be you would have had the Father ſo draw, as that you might ride in a Charriot of Eaſe and Idleneſs; you would have him ſo draw, as that you might ſit ſtill; But, you ſaid not, Draw that I may run. *Draw me and we will run after thee*, *Cant.* 1. 4. You would have been drawn to Heaven without your running.

Have you not oppoſed his drawing, *Refuſed to hearken, and pulled away the Shoulder, ſnuffed at his Word, hardned your heart as an Adamant?* Zach. 7. 11. 12. *Turned back from him, and would not conſider any of his wayes*, Job. 34. 27. May not he ſay, I called and you refuſed? Did you not keep ſtrong Holds and Forts againſt his grace, beſieging you to over-come you? Did you uot labour to build, and ſet up ſtrong Holds, and high Reaſonings againſt the wayes of *God*, and labour by a wicked induſtry, to get off all ſight and thoughts of *God*, that you might be without *God* in the World? We may ſay, *God* forſaketh none in time but thoſe that forſook him firſt, and for their forſaking him; And if ſo then he willed to forſake none but thoſe that would firſt forſake

ſake him; And alſo willed and decreed from Eternity to forſake none, but thoſe he foreſaw would firſt forſake him; And all this is well conſiſtent with ſpecial Grace, and conſequently Election; provided we ſay not that he will, and doth forſake all after the ſame manner and meaſure. He is before hand with every man, and will be ſo.

Hath he not knocked as though he would have beat down the houſe, and thou would'ſt not open? Have you not oppoſed the lower Actions and Motions of the Spirit, and Warred againſt him in his firſt aſſaults, and rebelled and vexed his Spirit in his firſt approaches, and reſolved to go no further in wayes of Religion? If now he take not ſuch internal or external Pains with thee as formerly; may he not ſay like that, *My People would not hearken to my Counſel, Iſrael would none of me,* (Heb. *had no liking of me*) *ſo I gave them up to their own hearts Luſts.* How long did he ſtretch out his hands to diſobedient and gain-ſaying Souls? Light came, and thou loved'ſt Darkneſs, and drew the Curtains to ſleep, and now, it may be he ſaith, *Sleep on,* as once to his Diſciples; *And yet this very Providence is an awaking Providence, and ſhould awake thee as it did them*; They ſlept no more after Chriſt ſaid in anger, *Sleep on.*

Obj. 12. *But however, I would have had God have saved me notwithstanding my sins, though not from my sins.*

Anſ. Very likely! But would you have Chriſt the Miniſter of ſin? *God* forbid. Would you have *God* an unholy Governour of the World? Would you have it as well with the Wicked as with the Righteous? Would'ſt thou have *God* never call men to an account that oppreſs thee, wrong thee? May he not glorifie his Juſtice on wilful Sinners, chuſing their own Deſtruction, and fitting themſelves for it, notwithſtanding his ſtriving with them to reclaim them; as well as glorifie his Mercy on repenting, returning Sinners? Would you not have *God* threaten Sinners? Or would you have him not execute threatnings, and ſo rule the World by Deceit? He told men what to hold to and expect, if they go on in their ſins; and they chuſe, rather to ſuffer the Eternal Penalty (ſo they may have the ſhort pleaſure of ſin) than Happineſs on the reaſonable terms of it.

Obj. 13. *However, I would have had him have threatned a leſſer Puniſhment.*

Anſ. You may rather ſay, He threatned too little; and that it was rather fit, if it could

could have been, that he had threatned more: For you would not forſake your ſins for thoſe threats. This is virtually to ſay, It is not fit and right, to make ſevere Laws againſt thoſe courſes that men are not willing, or reſolved not, to leave, or cannot find in their hearts to leave. *They ſhall know whoſe words ſhall ſtand mine or theirs*, Jer. 44. 28.

Obj. 14. *But it is almoſt incredible that men, all men ſhould be ſo wicked, ſo inſuperably wicked, with proper voluntary wickedneſs diſtinct from weakneſs, as not ſome of them to do without this extraordinary and unneceſſary (as to the making men inexcuſable) Help from above, what they can do (in the ſenſe explained) without it. If this was ſo, God would be juſt indeed in their ſevereſt Condemnation, though he do not give them this extraordinary help that actually cauſeth their Converſion.*

Anſ. It is almoſt incredible indeed, and will be looked on hereafter as a Devil's-miracle, if I may ſo ſpeak. And it is to have unworthy Thoughts of *God* to think, that that-refuſing Mercy on the terms of it which is the Condemning ſin, will not appear ſome wonderfully culpable thing that men will befool themſelves, and wonder at their wickedneſs, with aſtoniſhment, for; And to

to think, *God* will not appear moſt clearly juſt in their ſevereſt Condemnation. This ſhould rather encline you to aſſent to what I have ſpoken, than be looked on as a conſiderable objection againſt it.

Obj. 15. *But yet it is a thing very unaccountable to us, and almoſt unconceiveable, that God ſhould be ſo gracious as to do more for any; however, that he ſhould fix on ſuch and ſuch perſons in particular, that were as guilty of ſuch provocations by their wilfulneſs for a time as others?*

Anſ. It is ſo. This is a depth that no man can give a reaſon of. It would be, to pretend to be wiſer than the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 11. 33. Yea, or Chriſt himſelf while he was in this World, *Mat.* 11. 25. *Luke* 10 21. And to be wiſe not only above, but contrary to what is written, Not to confeſs our ſelves at a loſs and only admire this. And they that will give Reaſons, like reaſons of ſuch Counſels, as if they had been *Gods* Councellours; I dare confidently ſay, ſhall give ſuch as would, if entertained practically, deſtroy all Religion.

I do think that they do beſt, that granting and holding ſuch things do leaſt buſie themſelves about them, but only in admiring ſuch his wayes as above their reach; And I alſo think that a plain unlearned man, that hath

hath heard little of Learned mens debates about these Controverses of Free-will and Special Grace; That liveth a Holy thankful Life, wondering at Gods mercy, in every good Motion of his Spirit for help and restraint; and in every providence promoting his souls welfare, as being such special Mercy, that it was bestowed on him, when denied others as good and better than he; that I say, such a one hath better, and righter Apprehensions though he know not how to explain them; than I, yea or then almost any that have much studied these things. And I would uot have entertained so many searching Thoughts about these things (which I confess yet have not been very many) had it not been in hope to convince them that I apprehend, are in dangerous extreams. And though I think I have, or however I could more fully demonstrate, that these things are in the main, as I have here spoken; yet I cannot but look upon my self as speaking very unsatisfactorily of the manner How.

What Austin *speaks concerning* Tempus, *may be applied to this* Adjutorium gratiæ, *and many other things.* Quid est ergo tempus? Si nemo ex me quærat; scio, si quærenti explicare velium, nescio; fidenter tamen dico scire me, *&c. Confess. lib.* 11. *cap.* 14.

Obj. 16. *It doth seem plain, that mans Destruction will be of himself; for it doth lye*

lye on Gods being wanting to man: yet we are loath it ſhould altogether lye on man; therefore we will ſuppoſe, It may be it will lye on neither, Why may it not be laid on the Devil only? It may be, God is no way wanting, ſo as that we can tell what he ſhould have done more to ſave them; But it may poſſibly be laid on the Devil, or the World, or Fleſh.

Anſ. If theſe could force mens Wills againſt their Wills, (which is a Contradiction) or take away the Natural power of Willing, or deprive of Power to do the Imperate acts, this would ſo far excuſe. And to ſay that *God* would condemn a man in ſuch a caſe, would be to lay a mans Condemnation on *God*, as not having done enough for us. This would be to charge *God*, if not directly and expreſly, yet obliquely, and by Involution, as it is commonly ſaid, Theſe words were to charge *God* obliquely, ſince they were made uſe of as an excuſe. viz. *The Serpent beguiled me*; *And the Woman which thou gaveſt me*, &c. Satan, the World, and the Fleſh cannot hinder us from Duty without our own conſent, or againſt our will: For if ſuch a thing ſhould happen, it would be no Duty formally; they can only tempt. Will this excuſe a Thief before a Judg? Such a one tempted me, or the Money tempted me; But if another had forced him to that Act againſt his will

will, it would have excuſed before the Judge. *Why hath Satan filled thy heart?* Theſe words were ſpoken by way of Reproof for a Fault, which would not have been if *Ananias* could not have helped it. The meaning thereof is, Why didſt thou, why would'ſt thou, give way to that his Temptation?

Obj. 17. *But it may be God hath decreed to, and ſo will, Condemn me, do what I can.*

Anſ. Abhor ſuch an Opinion or Thought. This, all ſides diſown: The utmoſt that is pretended by any moderate men, about this we are now ſpeaking, is, That there is a poſitive Decree to permit ſome to undo, or not hinder them from thus undoing themſelves. And this I ſhall not deny, but wiſh them, that are better able to judg, to conſider (ſince ſuch Conceptions are only to help our Underſtandings, that our imperfect Notions may be in ſome meaſure rationally conſiſtent) Whether it be neceſſary to conceive, and ſo to affirm any ſuch poſitive Decree to permit; whether a conception of a meer Negation of a Will in him to hinder, a not decreeing to hinder, be not enough: For you uſe to found, this Poſitive decree Not to hinder, upon his fore-ſight of what men would do if not hindred; now if they would do it without, and antecedently, to ſuch

such a positive Decree, what need is there? nay it is not to conceive a vain positive Act, to affirm such a positive Decree to permit that which men would do without such a positive Decree to permit, if he do not positively decree to hinder? But to let this pass, and suppose such a positive Decree (he giving men means enough, and more than enough) not to go any further in hindering them from going on in their Impenitency.

How comes it about, that men make stops and Exceptions about the Decrees of *God* in reference to their Soul-concernments, and never make such questions about them in other concerns, wherein Learned men that differ about these things, seem better agreed about positive Decrees? Men Plow and Sow, and never question whether *God* hath decreed, whether there shall be any Increase. When yet *God* hath reserved to himself a liberty here, and may, for any thing they know, blast all their Corn, and doth sometimes (and therefore deceed it) notwithstanding their good Husbandry. Yet none here saith, I will neither plow nor sow; for if he have decreed a good Crop, I shall have one, if not, I shall not have it; But this satisfieth men here, Though *God*, it may be, will blast all, do what I can; yet *God* useth to succeed diligent Endeavours. But here, in the case in hand, you have

have far more reason to be confident: For *God* hath reserved to himself here no liberty to blast at all. All agree in this, that none shall fail, or not find that heartily seek, and so continue; nor shall so choose, and pursue this better Part, and miss of it. *He that cometh to him, he will in no wise cast off.*

All agree, that there are no Decrees but what are well consistent with the Truth of these Promises, and all Notions of Decrees really inconsistent with such Promises are false: As also all those Notions of Decrees that are not consistent with his threatnings; as, He that repenteth not, shall perish. But one may perceive how it comes about, that men fly to Decrees here, and not in worldly Concernments. Men are more hearty for worldly Concernments; but have a mind to go on in their sins, and would fain find out some excuse for their sloth, and to lay the fault on *God* that they perish.

But it would be a wiser, and easier course, *To be making your Calling and Election sure*, than be making Objections from such things as you do not understand, to hinder you. You in vain expect to be carried to Heaven, or to escape Hell without diligent Endeavours of your own. Had those now in Heaven, continued while they were here on earth to make such Objections, so as to be by them hindred from giving up themselves

selves to the obedience of Faith, they had never come there.

18. Obj. *I wish I had heard, or considered such things sooner: you now speak too late. For I may answer, as they answered the* Prophet, *when called on to turn and live,* Jer. 2. 10. cap. 18. 22. *No,* say they, *there is no hope, for we have followed after, &c.* They meant, *Past cure, and so past care, The case is now desperate. We have so long accustomed our selves to sin, that there is no possibility of our becoming better; or we have so long provoked God, as that there is no hope we should find mercy. So am I hardned in sin by custom, that I cannot Repent and Turn. I have indeed been wanting to my self, and not God; therefore I must say, My destruction was of my self, and is of my self, from those former sins, when I could have done otherwise; but it is not now of my self this day that I hear this, in that I do not turn: for now something else hinders; I cannot now, with a Cannot distinct from a Will not.*

Answ. It is apparently otherwise, concerning any duty that is now required of you. Do not you know that you sin against God, in not turning from sin to God this day? Then you can turn, or God would not be offended at you for not now turning. Do you think God is angry at you for not turning to him this day, and can you think it would not be better for you to turn,

turn, or that he will not receive you if you do thus turn?

I dare conſideratly ſay upon good ground from Scripture, you can go this day, and do that which would be accepted of God. I do not ſay, you can go this day and ſo rejoyce in God and his ways as ſome others, or that you can have ſuch paſſionate and ſenſible workings of affections as others; or that you, that have not been accuſtomed, can perform duties in ſuch a manner as others, though you was never ſo willing, and if ſo, I dare ſay, it is not your duty at preſent. But you may do that this day, which would be accepted by God, would you do what you can this day in obedience, and reſolve by Gods help to go on, and never to turn aſide, and God will cauſe thee in time to be more Chriſtian-like; And if for thy former great ſins God ſhould never make thy life here ſo comfortable as others; yet if you thus cleave to the Lord, with full purpoſe of heart, as one reſolved as an honeſt man in integrity, that wherein you have done iniquity, you will do ſo no more; and that you will not live in the neglect of any known duty, but will do what you can in every thing, with the utmoſt of your ability, and continue thus doing, you ſhould be ſaved. But yet this is certain, That (though you have this Natural power) you are ſo wick-

ed, that this you will not do, that is Morally Cannot, without the Fathers drawing. And therefore if you do thus Will, and do actually, it is from this drawing of the Father, and from the gratious operation of the Spirit, not only giving the power, but ſome way cauſing the very act of Willing diſtinct from giving the power of Willing and nilling, which every ſound man, I mean every man in his right wits, hath.

Let every one now make haſte, and ſay *hath he not waited long enough knocking, while I refuſed to open?* Do not ſay, I can when I will in this life, turn and be accepted by your doctrine, therefore I may delay. I have indeed ſhewed, you can when you will; but I have alſo ſhewed, you cannot in a ſenſe explained, obtain of your ſelf to Will it, without extraordinary wonderful help from above.

If I maintained, as ſome do, that God only giveth men the power of Willing and nilling (let it come from Nature or Grace, that makes no difference in the caſe) and that this is that power, without which men could not ſin, or, which is all one, could not be inexcuſable in not turning to God, and that God did not, nor ever will go farther with any that are, or ever were converted; This would indeed be to maintain that you have no Impotency in any ſenſe, but that you can for any Impotency what-

whatſoever Repent and turn, as well as any that ever did turn, and alſo that this you will have conſtantly while you are a man bound to repent and obey the Goſpel. This indeed would have ſome colour to maintain your preſumption; for then I could not tell, nor any elſe, how to calm your preſumption in delaying, but only by theſe two conſiderations, you may dye ſoon, or be ſooner deprived of your reaſon and underſtanding; But beſide theſe conſiderations I could not tell what argument to uſe to perſwade men (who are apt to have as good conceits of themſelves, as of others that are no more helped and inabled) why they may not have a conceit, they may at any time, while continued ſound men, quit themſelves as others that had no more help or aſſiſtance from Heaven, and no more Impotency to Good then they will have, and yet did quit themſelves well, after great neglects and long delays. But I can tell you, and have told you, that by delaying and neglecting the means, and helps, and aſſiſtances he affords, you increaſe your *Moral Impotency*, and may, and do provoke the Spirit to deny his help to work in you to Will, while you have the power of Willing, being ſound men; And if the Spirit do not help you in this extraordinary way, you will as certainly, as what is moſt certain, go on even till

Death, through your morally inſuperable wicked wilfulneſs, And can no more in the moral ſenſe explained thus Will, Believe and Repent, without this extraordinary help which you provoke him to deny you, than a dead man can ariſe in a Natural ſenſe without a miracle.

Queſt. *What may we do to be made willing, to obtain and ſubſerve this drawing of the Father, and help of the Spirit to make us thus willing?*

Anſw. Some have ſcarce any remiſs will or deſire at all of turning to God, and ſo have as little deſire to ask or uſe directions. Some may be almoſt willing, but not altogether in the prevailing degree, as for example, ſome are willing to part with many ſins, but it is not yet their prevailing will to part with all. Some again are almoſt willing to give up themſelves to God in every thing, but there is an æſtuation or fluctuation of their Will, are waveringly willing, off and on; but are not come to a point, to the ſettled firme choyce and reſolution which is only the prevailiug bent. This drawing of the Father is frequently thus gradually; at firſt a more wavering willingneſs is produced, and at laſt a more fixed and ſetled.

Firſt; Pride not your ſelves, nay, reſt not ſatisfied as if ſafe, for you are not, in ſuch begun willingneſs, in your willingneſs

neſs in part to do ſome things, yea many things as *Herod*, yea all things like that young man in the Goſpel, who went away ſorrowful, as having ſome little willingneſs to what he refuſed, but not a prevailing choyce. But yet own and bleſs God and his Spirit for ſuch beginnings, if you deſire they ſhould grow and increaſe. Know that theſe come not from your own wicked hearts of themſelves.

Secondly; Deſire others to pray for you.

Thirdly; Pray for theſe things as you are able,

Fourthly; Meditate much on ſuch things as may make you thus willing; The vanity of the world; Excellency of God; the Love of God and Chriſt; what he hath done and ſuffered for you, *&c.*

Fifthly; When almoſt willing, unconſtantly willing, endeavour to engage your ſelves, to tye your ſelves faſt. It is Gods way, and you may expect his bleſſing on it, ſo to engage your ſelves as you may ſay to temptations, *I have opened my mouth, and cannot go back*; *I have ſworn and will performe.*

Sixthly; Let all take this advice. Attend on his Ordinances. *He gives the encreaſe, while* Paul *plants, and* Apollo *waters*, Zach. 14. 16. *It ſhall come to paſs that whoſoever will not come up of all the Fa-*

lies of the earth to Jerusalem, *to worship the King the Lord of Hoasts, on them shall be no rain.* Keep in the Church, this is the way to expect raining on. *Irenæus* * calls the Spirit, *The Heavenly voluntary or arbitrary Raine*; And also compares it to the dew, and the Church to *Gideons* Fleece, on which the dew fell. Keep in the way, and road of the Spirit as you expect raining on. *Rejoyce to stand within* Jerusalem's *Gates*, Psal. 122. The Church is Gods Vineyard, it is good to be in it. It lyeth more especially in the influences of the Sun, and there fall the watering showers of Grace. It is a fearful thing to run away from his walks; And to get out of the reach of those weapons which are mighty through God. Do not say, Let Ordinances alone till men be converted, let Reading, Hearing, Praying alone. *Faith cometh by hearing, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord* (even in the glass of the Gospel) *we are transformed into his Image by the Spirit of the Lord. God opened* Lidia's *heart in hearing* Paul, Act. 16. 14. *She heard us, and God opened her heart to attend to the things spoken.* Let even them come that

* Lib. 3. cap. 19. *Sicut arida terra, si non percipiat humorem, non fructificat: sic & nos lignum aridum existentes primum nunquam fructificaremus ad vitam, sine supernâ, voluntariâ pluviâ*, &c. *Quapropter necessarius nobis est ros Dei, ut non comburamur neque infructuosi efficiamur*, &c.

that attend not; God may open their hearts, as hers, to attend and conſider. They are ſaid to reject the Counſel of God againſt themſelves, *that refuſed to comply ſo far as to be baptized of* John, Luk. 7. 29,30. *It is a deſireable thing for men to, and dreadful for them not to, frame their doings to return unto the Lord*, Hoſ. 5. 4.

Now upon a Review of what I have ſaid concerning *Natural and Moral Impotency*, I add this. It would not much diſpleaſe me for any to deny what I have ſaid in going further then my great deſign in this diſcourſe, which is to ſhew that men amongſt us have no Impotency but the Moral to the performing the Goſpel-condition. Let any man enjoy his own thoughts for me, that thinks there may be ſome Natural Impotency that doth not excuſe from ſin, ſo he do but grant there is no Natural Impotency on us to the performing the Goſpel-condition, that is, to the doing what muſt be done, or we undone; for he deſtroys not by ſuch an opinion, the Goſpel-grace, ſince he held there is a remedy brought to mens choyce. Though yet if he grant it true of the Goſpel-condition, I think unleſs he go as far as I have done, his notions will not be poſſibly conſiſtent. And let any man alſo differ about what is ſaid of them that enjoy not the Goſpel, ſo he do

but grant there is no Impotency on us that enjoy it (but what I have mentioned) that can hinder our Salvation: for this is of leſs concernment to us. And theſe are both things that I would have excluded out of this diſcourſe, if I could well have told how, and have kept up a conſiſtency of other things of the greateſt moment to our ſelves.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAge 31. line 10. *after*, But, read *the Moral.*
P. 109. l. 5. for *there*, r. *theſe.*
P. 4. l. 13. for *diſhoneſt*; *For*, r. *diſhoneſt for*;
P. 13. l. 4. r. *premiſe.*
P. 14. l. 30. for *and*, r. *as.*
P 16. l. 19. for *in theſe*, r. *in theſi.*
P. 33. l. 24. r. *ſetling.*
P. 48. l. 18. for *inveterate* r. *radicated:*
P. 51. l. 13. for *this*, r. *thus.*
P. 52. l. 1. r. *Citobulus.*
P. 60. l. 1. r. *good*, l. 7. r. *free will*, l. 9. & 18. r. *wilfulneſs.* In Margen, r. *occaſional.*
P. 83. l. 20. r. *practically.*
P. 90. l. *penult*, r. *conceſſions.*
P. 93. l. *ult.* for *only*, r. *any*
P. 96. l. 5. after *way*, r. *elſe.*
P. 107. l. 24. r. *conditional.*
P. 115. l. 12. r. *being chiefly event.*
P. 121. l. *penult*, for *quod*, r. *quo.*
P. 130. l. 12. for *would*, r. *could.*